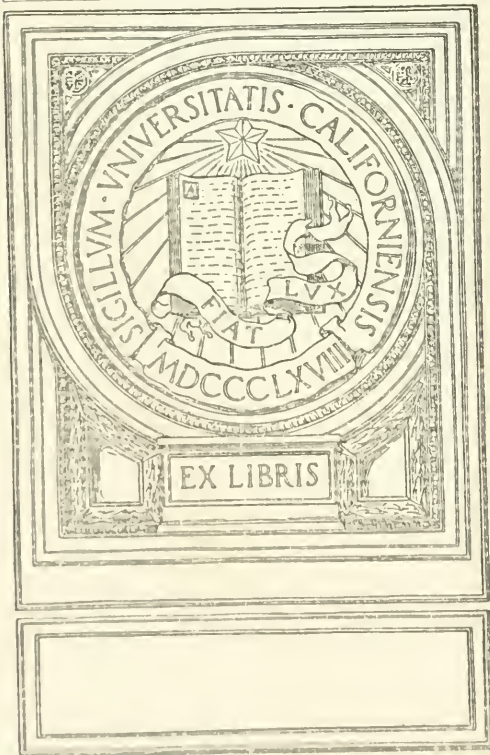


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NEWTON DOGVANE.

A STORY OF

ENGLISH COUNTRY LIFE.

BY

FRANCIS FRANCIS.

WITH

Illustrations by Leech.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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NEWTON DOGVANE.

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PREPARATORY, AND SHOWING HOW MR. NEWTON
DOGVANE FIRST IMBIBED A TASTE FOR FIELD
SPORTS.

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Down

A LONG preface is like a long grace; it keeps you from your meat, while the viands grow cold, the vegetables indigestible, and the sauces lumpy. Who Mr. Newton Dogvane was, can be explained in a few words—he was the son of his father; and the whole city, as well as Mr. Dogvane, junior, knew at least *what* his father was. Dogvane, the elder, was a successful drysalter, who had begun life upon small means, but by dint of minding his own business, and looking more after his own

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affairs than those of his neighbours, he had managed to get together a decent amount of worldly goods, and was generally reported to be a safe man; a man whose word was as good as his bond—and that is no light meed of praise in these degenerate times. Mr. Dogvane never speculated out of his business, and not very largely in it. He had married early an estimable woman, and that one word describes her better than a page of eulogy.

Mr. Newton Dogvane, to whose exploits we shall more particularly direct our attention, had commenced his education at a commercial academy in the neighbourhood of Highgate; and his early experience in the wild sports of the North, South, East, and West of London, had been confined to the capturing of tittle-bats in the ponds between Highgate and Hampstead, and the demolishing of confiding wrens and robins with a horse-pistol tied to a stick. The said weapon, having been acquired at a vast outlay of pocket-money, was kept,

under vows of inviolable secrecy, by the head gardener, who was incited thereto by sundry bribes of sixpences and shillings, bestowed by the youthful Newton on the functionary who held the above post under the Rev. Jabez Whackstern, instructor of youth, and keeper of the academy aforesaid.

Oh! those half-holidays, when Newton and his *fidus Achates*, a lad named Bowers, familiarly known as Ted, were wont to sally forth with the piece of ordnance carefully concealed under their jackets, and a penn'orth of Curtis and Harvey's double extra fine-grained (they wouldn't have had it out of any other canister upon any consideration), and half a pound of No. 7's, with an old copy-book for loadings! The way in which they examined the outlets, like merchantmen about to break through a blockade, to see that "That Old Sneakum," the usher, was out of the way, and then the painfully easy and unconstrained manner in which they sidled, or rather melted away

through the gate!—or were, mayhap, met out of bounds by the awful Whackstern himself, and sent back to pass the afternoon of promised enjoyment in the dreary and forsaken school-room, transcribing a swinging “Impo”—the one with a stick, rudely fashioned like a gun-stock, and the other with the horse-pistol, (loaded possibly), stuffed up the backs of their jackets. The shifts they were put to at tea-time, and at prayers, to keep the contraband articles out of sight, until they could return them to the gardener! These were things to be remembered.

But when their precautions proved successful, and they got out without being seen, then, to watch the gravity of their proceedings! When safe in the fields, how the horse-pistol and the deputy stock were drawn from their hiding-place, and connected, *secundum artem*, with string! Now the process of loading, with a charge large enough for three pistols, was gone through; and “a bird in

the hand is worth two in the bush," perchance was torn from the commercial-practical copy-book, and rammed well home ; and the string fastened to the trigger—Newton being the bearer of the weapon, and Ted captain of the gun—and the game being a-foot, a robin, wren, or possibly a noble hedge-sparrow was spied ; how they stole forward, step by step, with the caution of Red Indians on a scalp hunt, lest the game should take wing and baffle the attack, ere they could get within the prescribed range (two yards and under); and when at length all was ready, and Newton had taken deadly and deliberate aim at the unconscious warbler for the space of two minutes, and the word was passed to "pull away," and the result was a snick, or a flash in the pan—what hammering of the unlucky flint ensued, while the bird flew away to another hedge some twenty yards off, and a new trail had to be struck. Or, when the victim fell pierced with a No. 7, and, being

only winged, had to be scrambled for amongst the brambles and thorns, and was finally pouched—what songs of triumph were sung as it was borne away, to be picked in the bedroom at midnight; the feathers, &c. (though the *ſc.* were on one occasion left in, the game being by mistake cooked wookecock-fashion) were collected and disposed of, and the remains—some quarter of an ounce of mangled flesh—were scientifically cooked, on penknives, over surreptitious candles and lucifers obtained by the ever-ready Ted at the all-sorts shop. What a delicious feast they held! Albeit to the unbiassed taste the flavour of tallow and smoke would have been evident—but never mind, the penny jam-turnovers and the ginger-beer went a great way; and they envied not the Doctor his hot snack and portnegus, nor the wretched “Sneakum,” that most miserable of ushers, his “little snack” of dry bread, high flavoured Dutch, and about half a pint of curiously thin ale. Poor fellow!

Yes, indeed, those were days to be remembered for many a long year to come; and so was that holiday, when on Hampstead Heath they rode races on the gallant donkey of the north, or, mayhap, the fiery pony of the heath, exacting their six-pennyworth of donkey or pony flesh, like youthful Shylocks, to the last grain, and enacting the White Horse of the Peppers, or the Wild Huntsman of the Hartz, as set forth in a terrific weekly publication, comprising an exciting woodcut and sixteen columns of terror for one penny.—Who does not remember that awful print, with its Murder-holes—pirates who boiled their victims in oil—highwaymen and scoundrels of every phase, who shone forth therein, amidst all their deeds of blood and villainy, as so many heroes, whom a mean illiberal system, called Law, had suddenly cut off in the very midst of their noble and gallant exploits? Who hasn't waked at midnight with stiffened hair and perspiring limbs from horrible dreams

resulting from that agreeable publication, and heavy scrap-pie (misnamed beefsteak), apples, and gingerbread combined? But time has given all this its accustomed shading and softening long since; and not only so, but has even hallowed these recollections, until we say with delight, "Ah! those were the days!" Who doubts it? Those were the days! And many an old man, as well as he of middle age, will echo, "Those were the days!"

"Oh happy years! Once more, who would not be a boy!"

CHAPTER I.

SHOWS HOW NEWTON PROGRESSES IN THE ARTS OF
VENERY, &C.

WE will not follow up this portion of the history of Newton's boyish days—that would be at once tedious and unnecessary. Suffice it to say, that in due time the pistol was discovered, and Newton and Ted sent to their friends. The gardener was dismissed, and the pistol was promoted to the office of guardian of the Doctor's strong box, while Newton was promoted to his father's counting-house. But, true to its bent, the "twig" would at times steal forth on sporting excursions, and the roach and gudgeon of the New River, and

the finches of Clapham, became the objects of Newton's solicitude. Newton had accumulated, by dint of saving, a sum sufficient in his own mind to purchase a gun which he had seen labelled 14 & 6 in the New-cut, and hanging on the outside of a shop kept by a highly-preserved child of Judah, with the needful accompaniments. For in that shop—the “cynosure of neighbouring sporting eyes”—were stored choice articles of every description, to aid the experienced or inexperienced sportsman in his destruction of the *feræ nature* of his native land and elsewhere. Guns were there, double and single; rifles were there, and tremendous things for boar destroying, and other still more tremendous things for elephant and rhinoceros smashing, upon the principles laid down by the accomplished Mr. Gordon Cumming; and powder-horns were there, pouches and shot-belts; likewise fishing-rods, for bottom-fishing, for fly-fishing, for trolling, and spinning, and long

canes like barbers' poles for the river Lea, and of salmon-rods a store, creels and landing-nets, too, and gaff-hooks, and leisters, and eel-spears, otter-spears, with dog-chains, badger-tongs, rabbit-hutches, cat-traps and rat-traps, stoat, and weasel, and mole-traps, greyhound-slips and couples, with leading-strings, &c., &c.,—not forgetting the whips, spurs, bits, bats, stumps, balls, boxing-gloves, dumb-bells, foils and masks, fives-bats and racquets, toxopholite tools, and targets, and so on—anything, everything,—a complete sportsman's cheap arcana, all labelled and ticketed at the lowest possible remunerating price, as per placard, and yet all to be had at a considerable reduction by an experienced chapman; for the Israelite, though he spoileth the unwary Egyptian, will rather spoil him of the smallest known sum, than not at all—so pleasant and alluring is the chink of precious metal to the ear of the child of Israel.

Mo. Shecabs was the name of the proprietor

of all these treasures, and Mo. Shecabs stood at the door of his dwelling smoking a cheroot—for he was an aristocrat in his way—and waiting to take in any customers that chance might send him.

Enter NEWTON, bent on securing fourteen and sixpenny worth of imminent danger.

NEWTON *loquitur*. What's the price of that rusty gun, Mister?

Mo. (*indignans*). Rusty! s'help me! Vat d'ye mean? that 'ere Joe Manton! There ain't a spec on it. I vas offered a pound for that, last veek.

NEWTON. Why did'nt you sell it?

Mo. (*never disconcerted*). 'Cos I vas a fool. Fourteen and sixh the prish ish. Firsht-rate killer. Mishtare Caps shot his shelebrated match at a undred pigeons with that gun.

NEWTON. Did he kill 'em all?

Mo. Kill 'em all! In course he did.

NEWTON. Did he though! Then what did *he* ever part with it for?

Mo. Vot does anyone ever part with anythink for? they doesn't give 'em away, I suppose.

NEWTON. I s'pose not. You don't, anyhow, asking fourteen and six for *that* thing. I'll give you ten.

Mo. S'help me, young man, you'd better co home and study rithmetic, with the prish of old iron, house rents, good vills, and fixters. Wots to become o' my family? I can't sacrifice things.

NEWTON. (*turning away*). Oh! very well.

Mo. (*anxiously*). Here shtop a bit now. I tell you vat I'll do, I'll knock off shixpence.

NEWTON. (*sarcastically*). You don't mean it! What'll become of your family, if you go on sacrificing things in this way? No, no—there's Zeb Levy's got a better one for twelve. (*Going.*)

Mo. (*detaining him*). But vat d'ye vant? Vat d'ye vant? you wouldn't ave me rob myself! Take this powder-horn and this shot-

belt now for a pound. That'll do now—take 'em away afore I alters my mind.

NEWTON. Fifteen, for the lot.

Much chaffering and loud vociferation on the part of Mo. ensued, who vowed that he was giving things away every day—ruining himself and beggaring his family by his philanthropy and liberality—by dint of which Mo. screws Newton up to offer another shilling.

Mo. Say seventeen, and take 'em away.

NEWTON. Sixteen shillings.

Mo. Oh! I can't do it. Its no use. (*He enters the shop, smoking violently, and Newton walks slowly to Zeb Levy's; as he stops, however, and is on the point of being collared and dragged into a deal by that gentleman, he is touched by a sheriff-officer-like tap on the shoulder.*)

Mo. There now; you'd petter come and fetch them things away, cos my boy aint at home, and I can't send 'em.

Accordingly, Newton went back, after a little interchange of compliments had taken place between the rival dealers. The money was paid, and the articles borne away in triumph, Mo. a little disgusted at not having made more than 60 per cent. by the deal.

There was a wail of cats in the back garden of Newton's father's house at Brixton, that evening. Newton's papa and mamma having gone out to play a rubber at a friend's house, Newton could not rest till he had tried his treasure; in consequence of which there was a great picking out of leaden pellets with darning needles in Brixton the next morning, and several old ladies threatened proceedings against Mr. Dogvane, sen., for damage done to their favourite tabbies—albeit Newton was, of course, truly unconscious as to who the party could have been who was behind the offending gun, said to have been *let off* in Mr. Dogvane's back garden on the evening in question. Great execution did

Newton, during the ensuing winter, amongst the blackbirds and finches of Norwood and that ilk; and once, happening upon a duck, which was reposing in a small pond near the Battersea fields, he poached and pouched it, and got clear away from the farmer, after a stiff run, bringing home his quarry, which he proclaimed to be wild because it had a curly feather in the tail, that being the distinction, so some one had once told him, between wild and tame; although it turned out not only tame but tough—a venerable mallard who had seen six broods of his own begetting swim safely on the surface of the very pond where he at length met an untimely end.

CHAPTER II.

A DAY ON THE THAMES.

MR. DOGVANE, SEN., was addicted to Thames angling from a punt. Folks who have walked pleasantly chatting, after a Star and Garter dinner, on a warm summer evening, through the meadows by the river side, may have seen a moderately plethoric gentleman seated in an arm-chair in a punt. In mid-stream the punt is moored. It bristles with rods, all of which are evidently fishing for themselves, for the stout gentleman is fast asleep, with a handkerchief over his head—the picture of comfort and contentment. An empty pie-dish is near, on which reclines the head of an attendant

fisherman, equally somnolent with the party in the chair, around which porter bottles are grouped skilfully; and symptoms of tobacco, in the shape of various pipes, may be observed about the punt. All is peace and tranquillity. Suddenly a blue-bottle of inquiring mind perches on the ruby nose of the sleeping beauty in the chair. The blue-bottle proceeds upon a voyage of discovery, up the nose to the eyebrows—nothing worthy of remark in that direction. Back again—Hallo! Two spacious caverns! Now, as a member of the Blue-bottle Archæological Society, here is a phenomenon to be enquired into. So first he cautiously pokes his head round the corner, then carefully advances his forelegs towards the mouth of one of the caves, when—a-tishew!—the rash archæologist finds himself blown a yard into the air, amidst a perfect cloud of spray. In other words, the sleeper sneezes and wakes. That is Mr. Dogvane, or his pattern; he wakes up, and seizes one of the

rods; kicks the recumbent figure, who struggles into a sitting posture; and they forthwith make desperate efforts to catch fish—sometimes they do, but more often they don't. All this may be seen on any fine summer evening at Richmond, Twickenham, and on to Windsor, or even beyond. And this was the sort of thing Mr. Dogvane was much addicted to. It was his idea of sport.

“Newton, my lad,” said the worthy gentleman, one day, “I'm going down to Richmond with Tomkins, to-morrow, to fish. If you can get up in time, you may go with us; so be ready by six o'clock, my boy.”

And wasn't Newton up at six? or rather, wasn't he awake at three, or half-past? And didn't he roll, and tumble, and toss to and fro in his narrow bed? Didn't he get up to peep out into the morning, to see what sort of a day it was likely to be? And when, an hour or two later, it looked cloudy and warm, Newton prophesied good sport, and tried to sleep again.

Five o'clock.—Newton couldn't lie in bed any longer, so he dressed himself in haste, in order to be quite ready in time; and being, of course, three quarters of an hour too soon, he fidgetted and fussed about, alternately looking out of window and looking up his tackle. Six o'clock came, at last, after many hours of (to him) tardy delay. A hasty breakfast was swallowed by Newton, and a more deliberate and substantial one on the part of the governor; and they were, in good time, on their way to the station to catch the first train.

“Now, then, New., have you got the gentles?” asked his sire.

“All right, father,” said Newton, displaying a large bag of lively and loathsome carrions.

It might be all right to the Dogvanes; but it was all wrong to the rest of the passengers, who were not sufficiently ardent admirers of fishing to be greatly in love with the scent of carrion-gentles. Accordingly, when they had

all taken their places, remarks as to smells, &c. began to be made.

“Very extraordinary smell,” said a whey-faced gentleman who sat opposite to Mr. Dogvane. “Don’t you perceive it, sir?”

“I think I do,” answered Mr. Dogvane; “Lambeth bone-and-gas works, I suppose.” They *were* passing Lambeth. “Very bad, indeed! Wonder the Sanitary Commissioners don’t interfere. Worst place in London.”

“*I* smelt it before we came to Lambeth,” quoth a mild little man, who sat in one of the corners, and was muffled in a cloak.

“Did you? Ah! Wind sets down the line, I suppose. Wonderful nuisance!” said Mr. Dogvane.

“A-h’urra!” coughed the whey-faced gentleman from behind a pocket-handkerchief. But they passed Lambeth and even Vauxhall, and still the smell continued. In fact, it grew worse; the gentles, impatient of confinement, in spite of all Newton’s precautions,

began oozing through the bag and crawling on the floor.

“Ahem!” said the little man in the cloak, fixing Mr. Dogvane with his eye. “Wind can’t set two ways at once.”

“I apprehend not, sir, I apprehend not,” said Mr. Dogvane, pugnaciously.

“I’ve seen it do so in marine paintings, though,” answered the little man. “I’ve seen ships sailing one way, and flags blowing another, often. I remember, in the prize cartoon . . .”

“Dear me!” said one of the passengers, just as the train was leaving Putney, “what is that? and that? and that? They look like maggots.”

“Can’t be,” said Mr. Dogvane. “Why, I do declare, they *do* look like gentles.” As if, under the circumstances, a gentle was the most unlikely thing in the world. But it would’nt do. The eyes of the little man and the whey-faced gentleman were upon him and upon the fishing tackle.

“Gentles, and no mistake—for ground bait, I presume. The wind blows half a dozen ways, I think,” said the little man, with a quiet smile. But the whey-faced gentleman was extremely wroth, and, bristling up, said, “You don’t mean to say, sir, that you have presumed to bring a sack of live maggots into the train amongst-a-a-Christians? Guard, stop the train! Here’s a sack of maggots crawling all over us! Stop the train instantly, I insist!” They were going about thirty miles an hour, and the whey-faced man, seeing that his remonstrances were unheeded, and receiving a hot cinder in his eye from the engine, drew in his head rapidly, and, bursting with indignation, whisked his legs and feet up on to the seat, out of the way of the gentles, and sat doubled up like a live capital N. Then ensued defiances and snortings, with talkings at each other, and “Can’t think how people can presume to,” and “Can’t think how other people calling them-

selves," &c. &c. But it ended in smoke, and the whey-faced individual got out at Mortlake; Mr. Dogvane wished him good morning with sarcastic politeness; and before he had done explaining his grievance to the station-master, the train was at Richmond.

Mr. Tomkins had gone to Richmond overnight, to have all in readiness. Accordingly, they were rowed up to a punt which was pitched opposite the Duke of Buccleugh's lawn. And Newton found himself, for the first time, bent on endeavouring to inveigle from the bosom of Old Father Thames his scaly favourites.

The morning was fresh and cool, for the sun had hardly gained its power. The grass was emerald green; trees waved and rustled; birds sung; the scenery, to a smoke-dried Londoner, or indeed to anyone else, was beautiful. The fishermen predicted, as Thames fishermen always do, a fabulous take of fish.

First, the depth was plumbed, and the floats fixed at the requisite elevation. Then the mysterious process called ground-baiting was gone through as follows. The carrions were cast into a filthy tub, and mixed together with bran. Then portions of the mixture were kneaded up with lumps of clay, the size of oranges, and the loathsome dumplings were cast into the water for the delectation of the fishes. Then two gentles were stuck upon each hook, and, all being ready, the sport commenced.

Anxiety and gravity sat upon the countenances of Messrs. Dogvane and Tomkins, such as befitted so weighty and all-engrossing an occupation. The tackle was dropped into the water, and allowed to swim unrestrained down the stream, as far as the rod and line would allow. Then there was a short, sharp strike, and it was brought back to the side of the punt; and the same thing was done over and over again, on the part of the performers,

with unwearied patience and little variation, many thousand times in the course of the day.

It did not look very difficult to Newton. But, "Ah! sir," as old punt-fishers will say, "it isn't a thing to be learnt in a day." But what will not genius and the force of imitation effect? Ere long, Newton was hammering away at it as energetically as his seniors.

"Bite?" asked Mr. Dogvane of his friend.

Tomkins pursed his lips, and shook his head slowly and suspiciously, looking through the water at the end of the swim, as if he could distinguish the culprit who had so narrowly escaped, and as if he warned him that he'd better not, as he said, "come it too often."

Presently Newton struck, and pulled up a diminutive roach of some two-ounce weight.

"Here's the stockdolloger," said the fisherman.

“Bravo, New.!” said his father. “First fish,” he continued, looking at Mr. Tomkins, who nodded approvingly, as if to say, “He’ll do.”

Shortly after, Newton pulled up another, a little larger, and then another, a little larger still; and yet neither Mr. Dogvane’s nor Mr. Tomkins’s superior skill could compass the capture of a fish.

“Hem! ha!” coughed Tomkins. “Ground-bait here!” and two or three balls of “the mixture as before” were thrown in on Mr. T.’s side, without producing any material alteration in the sport.

“It’s singular,” remarked Mr. Tomkins, “how the fish *will at times run all one way.*” There was a dab at Newton’s float. Newton struck, and had hold of something heavy. Great excitement all through the punt—with numerous directions to “Ease him” and “Check him;” to “Take care of that punt-pole;” to “Let him run,” and

“Now pull him in”—till Newton, panting with excitement, led into the landing-net a monster barbel of three-quarters of a pound weight, or thereabouts.

“Hem!” coughed his father. “Ground-bait here!” But groundbait here, or ground-bait there, made no difference. Newton beat them both hollow. The elders fumed and broke their tackle in very vexation, when they did strike a good fish; and the fisherman grinned behind a quart pot—for the day grew warm, and beer became desirable. The fish went off, as it is called, and not only went off, but didn’t come on again. There was “a weather, or a wind, or a water, somewhere or other,” according to the fisherman, which prevented their biting; although hundred-weights had been caught in that very pitch last week, and tons would be caught next. After this, there was a good deal of eating, drinking, and smoking; at length Mr. Tomkins and Mr. Dogvane fell asleep, and Newton, having been

awake since three o'clock, fell asleep too. Finally the fisherman, having eaten every thing there was to be eaten, drank all the beer there was to be drunk, and smoked all the available tobacco, fell asleep also—and the sparrows came and ate up the carrion-gentles and other baits provided for the fishes. And Newton was not very much taken with this specimen of Thames fishing, though, in after years, when he became an adept in spinning, trolling, paternostering, ledgering, fly-fishing, &c., he enjoyed many a pleasant day upon its crystal wave.

CHAPTER III.

A DAY WITH THE SHORT TAILS.

“I SAY, Dogvane, come down and have a day’s shooting along with me at Groundslow, on Thursday; I’ve got a day’s ferreting there, and we’ll make up a party. There’s Waggle-tail, the clockmaker in George St., has promised to go; and I’ll drive you down in my pony-cart. It isn’t above fourteen miles; and we’ll have a leg of mutton at the Bold Dragoon afterwards; and there’ll be one or two in to dinner, and I think we may make out a jolly day of it. Old Bung—and, mind you, he’s a rum fellow, is Bung—will make one, so now what d’ye say?”

Mr. Tomkins had just popped into Mr.

Dogvane's office to utter the above invitation. Mr. Dogvane was busily occupied, adding 976 sides of bacon to 1134 sides of bacon, "and eleven's 21,—twenty-one hundred and ten. Quite correct. Thank ye; you see, I'm no shooter, Tomkins; never let off a piece in my life, excepting once, I give you my honour, and that was when I was a boy, sir. I did let off a fowling-piece then, and under very peculiar circumstances. I remember well; it was a flint-and-steel, and it snicked a great many times, and I hammered the flint, sir, with a penny piece, sir, and still it would not discharge itself; until, at length, thinking more effectively to accomplish my object, I—ah, hammered it with the back of my knife. Somehow, it struck a light, and, at the most unexpected interval, ahem! off went the piece, and as if—ah—what they call "endued with vitality," she sprung out of my hands, and vomited forth her contents at the same moment. The contents, sir, of the piece,

struck the earth at some distance off, and rebounded into a blacksmith's shop, several of the shots perforating the behinder portion of the blacksmith's waistcoat and small clothes, as he was at work, sir. There was a row upon the part of that blacksmith; and, thinking I had committed manslaughter, I left the piece where she lay, and, taking to my heels, ran away. I had, sir, to pay the owner of that piece nineteen shillings and threppence ha'penny for the loss of it; and it took all the pocket-money I had hoarded up for some time to do so, as I never had the courage to go and ask the blacksmith for it; for, on making enquiries secretly, I heard that his wife was daily employed in extracting the shots with a needle, and that she had already picked out nearly a thimbleful. I need not tell you that I did not become a shooter after that."

"But I thought I'd *seen* a gun at your house?"

“Yes, yes—my son’s—my son’s. I believe he is a keen hand—a very keen hand—goes out all round Battersea, and everywhere, almost. Brought home a duck the other day—*wild*. Ha, ha!” and he poked Tomkins in the ribs.

“No!” said Tomkins, appreciating some joke, with a chuckle.

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Yes.” (Another dig in the ribs.) “Wild! ha, ha, ha!”

“Ho, ho, ho.”

“Such a tough old feller! caught him on a pond, sir, shot him, grabbed him, and was marching off in triumph, when out came the farmer, and away bolted our New.”

“And got clear off, duck and all?”

“Got clear off, duck and all.”

“Well, that’s good, and we’ll have *him* on Thursday, anyhow; and you’ll come?”

“No, no; take him, if you like; I’m not fond of guns, or gunning.”

“Very well, then, so be it. By the way, then, he’d better take a shake down at my house the night before, as we shall start pretty early, and Brixton’s a deal out of the way.”

“Very good; please yourself, and, no doubt, my boy will be satisfied. Only, I say, old fellow,” and Mr. Dogvane shook his head seriously, “no nonsense, you know, after dinner. No steking it into the young un! If you don’t bring him home all square and right, mind, you’ll have to fight the battle out with the missus. Not that you’d find it very easy, either, for he’s a good lad, and not easily persuaded to take more than is good for him. He’s like me, likes it little and good.”

“No, no—you may rely upon me.”

“Very well, then it’s settled,” and, nodding shortly, he was once more immersed in hams and other dried goods.

“Mr. Spoodle.”

“Sir,” said a clerk, of solemn aspect and starched appearance, approaching from the office. “Sir.”

“Has Mr. Newton been here to-day?”

“Mr. Newton, sir, has just stepped down to Porpus and Gallon’s, about those tongues, sir.”

“Oh, ah! so he is—very good—good lad,” he murmured to himself, “looks to business, let me know when he comes in.”

“Yes, sir,” and the clerk disappeared.

“Looks to business, though he’ll have noneed to follow it as I have. No need whatever, I hope. Yet there’s no harm in his getting a little touch of business habits, and a sufficient knowledge of things, not to make a fool of himself in money matters. Yes. Heigho! I get almost tired of this, and long for a change, ever since that day, last year, with Judkins.”

Mr. Judkins was a retired friend of Mr. Dogvane’s, with whom he formerly dealt largely, and Mr. Judkins had got a very nice

little place on the Thames, with an acre or two of land, a pig, and a cow. Mr. Dogvane had, on invitation, gone down one Saturday morning, and come back on the ensuing Monday evening, and what with the looking at the cow, and the pig, and the spangled Polands; and what with the new milk, and the syllabub, and the new-laid eggs, which Mr. Dogvane assisted in robbing the mothers of; and what with a capital day's fishing, during which Messrs. Judkins and Dogvane captured numerous barbel and bream—Mr. Dogvane taking a barbel, weight seven pounds and nine ounces, which procured him the largest barbel prize, (a bronze double-extra-check superfine-finished winch) at his club, and over which day's fishing there was no trouble at all, the rods being lifted at once off sundry pegs in the hall, where they were kept always prepared and in order, and conveyed down the garden to the punt, which was lying properly provisioned &c. &c., at the steps; and what

with the nice little bit of salmon from a friend of Judkins's, still in business, and which was dropped by the down bus, that passed the door every evening; and what with a remarkably nice fore-quarter of lamb, and some very tender ducklings, with freshly-picked peas and beans culled by Judkins and Dogvane themselves; and what with some remarkably fine, dry old port, and after that some uncommonly fine, dry old cigars, and the least drop in the world of cold pale-brandy and water, out under the verandah, with the moon twinkling on the rippling river, on the warm summer's night, and the sweet-smelling creepers over the verandah, with the flitting moth and bat; in fact, what with good sport, the best of eating, drinking, and sleeping, pure country air, and an appetite, such as he seldom found in town, and the society of an old chum, Mr. Dogvane managed to enjoy himself so much, that he very often found himself thinking over it, and longing for another turn, and fancying

that he really had a great predilection for the country, and how nice it would be to have such a place of his own to ask Mr. So-and-so down to.

He little thought how many long afternoons poor old Judkins had practised patience (but nothing else) in a punt, in that very swim, in which, by the greatest fluke in the world, Mr. Dogvane happened, on this particular day, to get some good sport.

He little knew the domestic and private history of that cow, that garden, those span-gled Polands; or the worries and vexations poor old Judkins had had to endure with them. Well, well, perhaps it was as well he did not; or much of this history would have remained unwritten.

Having indulged his short fit of musing, which, by the way, never lasted long enough with Mr. Dogvane to interfere with business, he fell to work again, and calculated the profit to be derived from so many hundreds of

neats tongues ; and he was slowly rubbing his hands with satisfaction, when his son entered.

A well-made, smart-looking youngster, was our friend Newton. He was, perhaps, a trifle leggy—youths of seventeen often are—but his figure promised well, when it should become more filled out and set. He had curly light-brown hair, a high temple, and a bright, frank blue eye, which looked you in the face without blinking. He entered, and deposited a cheque upon his father's desk.

“ Porpus and Gallon. One—six—five—nineteen,” he said, as he delivered it.

“ Right,” said his father, referring to his ledger ; “ and, now, I think I'll just run round to the Slate, and have my chop. By the way, New., Tomkins has been here, and asked you to go shooting rabbits with him, at Groundslow, on Thursday, and I've accepted the invite for you, and you're to sleep at his house over-night, so as to be ready to

start in the morning. So polish up your musket, my boy, and go and have a day's pleasure. Though, what pleasure it can be to go letting off a gun, which jumps out of your hands, and shoots blacksmiths, whether you will or no, I can't see. But, never mind. Take care you don't shoot any blacksmith; and, I say, New., if you should fall in with my *wild* ducks, take care that they ain't tough old mallards, and that the farmer don't see you. Kek! kek! kek! chuckled the old gentleman. This was always a standing joke of his against Newton.

Newton coloured a trifle, but laughed off the joke. He appeared, however, much pleased with the prospect afforded of a day's rabbiting; and a rabbit, in his eyes, forthwith became an object of sport and desire, scarcely second to a stag of ten points.

“And now, I'll be off,” and taking his hat, gloves, and umbrella, he continued, while investing himself with these necessaries:—
“And if Charkin's clerk calls, say, we can't do

it.—It's not our way of doing business.—Don't like Charkins—speculates too much; besides, he's got some paper about, and has been flying kites, this while since. And I'll just look into Leadenhall Market too, and see if I can pick up a good cheap turkey for Sunday, while I am about it. None of your wild ducks, you know," and, with a further wink at his son, he departed.

No sooner was his father out of sight, than Newton, seizing the poker from amongst the fire-irons, put it to his shoulder like a gun, and said "bang" sundry times, which was supposed to be indicative of killing rabbits; and having disposed of an imaginary bunny in three corners of the room, was just dealing a shadowy death, with a loud "bang," upon one in the fourth, when Mr. Spoodle entered, and stood transfixed with amazement on seeing the occupation of his young master.

Relinquishing the deadly weapon somewhat sheepishly, and without pretending to offer

any explanation, Newton slipped into his father's chair, proceeded to transact the little matter of business which Mr. Spoodle had come in upon, as aptly and clearly as the governor himself could have done.

Wednesday evening found Newton at the hospitable quarters of Mr. Tomkins, at Bayswater; and after a latish dinner, Mr. Waggletail looked in for a cigar and a game of cribbage.

Waggletail was a sort of evidence of perpetual motion; he was never still for three seconds together. When he walked, he walked straight ahead, with quick, short, fussy steps, which seemed to say: "Get out of my way; I'm walking right through the world for a wager." His brows were always slightly knit, and his look downcast, as if he were pondering over the affairs of the state, instead of, like the jolly young waterman, "thinking of nothing at all."

He talked quickly, interminably, and impor-

tantly ; and when he thought he had said anything to the point, he gave a short cough, "ahem." You had but to wind him up, like one of his own clockè, by some remark, no matter what (he had always something to say on every subject, whether he knew anything of it or not), and then set that tonguey pendulum of his going, and no mill-wheel that ever clacked could keep pace with him. He was, this evening, very great upon shooting, though he knew nothing whatever about it. He had bought a cheap Brummagem-double at a sale, a few weeks before, and was mighty acute in demonstrating all its advantages and beauties, and he looked with an eye of slight disdain on Newton's poker.

What a filling of shot-pouches and powder-flasks there was ! and what a selection of caps and waddings ! what anticipations of great deeds and great results on the morrow ! How Mr. Tomkins related of that day, when they killed thirty-three couples of rabbits, and

so forth ; and a vision of thirty-three couples of rabbits walked in grim and endless array through Newton's slumbers. Now he chevied a visionary rabbit, which always slipped from before his gun at the moment of firing ; and how he felt utterly constrained to destroy it, and chased it, as it shifted, until the perspiration ran down his face, till he tumbled over a precipice into space ; and how the rabbit resolved itself into the substantial Welsh one he had eaten for supper, and which reigned " Lord upon his bosom's throne," or whatever that quotation is, matters very little ; only, as it happened, we mention it.

Towards morning, he fell into an uneasy doze, and was gradually dropping off into sound sleep, when a tremendous row at the door brought him yawning out of bed.

" Now, then, six o'clock—lively does it. Coffee down-stairs in ten minutes ; so, sharp's the word," and Mr. Tomkins went rumbling down to the lower regions.

Out of bed bounced Newton, as soon as he was sufficiently awake to apprehend the precise state of things. It was dark, but Tomkins had left a candle at his door, so he took it in, and proceeded to perform Chinese puzzles and charades with his clothes—getting his legs into the wrong forks of his trowsers, and then discovering that they were hindside before, and then reversing them, &c. &c., until, garmented at last, he struggled through his difficulties, and got down.

There he found Tomkins busily employed in the mysteries of coffee, and day just breaking.

“Excuse the slavey not being about, young fellow, and make yourself useful.”

“Thank ye,” said Newton, “I will.”

So they boiled eggs and toasted bacon, which was not all ready for them over night, and then there was a tap at the window-pane, and Tomkins let in Waggletail, who was come to breakfast, and who entered in a great hurry,

with his hat on, of course, (he never had time to take that off.)

“Well—eh! all right—eh! capital morning?”

“Rained precious last night, though,” said Tomkins, dubiously.

“Rained from twenty-five minutes past one to seventeen minutes after three? But it’s a first-rate morning for us now.”

“I don’t know,” said Tomkins; “rabbits won’t bolt well after rain.”

“No, no, they won’t bolt well after rain.” (It was his first essay at rabbit shooting, but never mind, he knew *all* about it.) “No, they won’t, that’s quite true—well! yes! coffee! yes!—an egg? yes!—only way I don’t like eggs is in a sav’ry omlette. I’ll tell you about that sav’ry omlette. Went down with some fellows once, sir, near Richmond, fishing, or shooting, or something; well, sir, we went to a house, sir, and they brought us in a dish, didn’t know what it was—looked like a

pudding. Well, Wiggins says, 'Have a bit of pudding, Wag?' So I had some, and Figgins had some; so I saw Wiggins take a mouthful, and turn, sir, blue, sir, and then as pale as that ceiling, sir; I smelt something a little queer; so whilst the gal that waited was in the room, I wouldn't tackle it; but—ha! ha! poor Wig! it pretty near did for *him*. So I waits till the gal went out, and then says I to Wig, 'What is it?' 'I don't know,' says Wig, guggling in his throat. And what between not being decided about swallowing it, and not being able to make up his mind about spitting it out again, it pretty nigh choked him. Well, sir, I give you my word that the prevailing and only flavour was that of sulphur and assafœtida. 'What's these little green things,' says Fig., 'pah! how nasty it smells!' So he shoves his plate away, and I pushed mine away, and Wig got up and looked out of window. So what's to be done? we could'nt eat it; I wouldn't have eat it, sir, for five

hundred pound. However, the people were friends of Wig's, and he thought they'd be so offended, if the plates all went away untouched, so he was for pocketing it! but, by Jove! who was going to have that smell, sir? in his pocket? Nobody. The only thing to be done, was to chuck it on the fire, and we did chuck it on the fire, and of all the crack-crack! pop-popping! it made, you'd have thought it was the 5th of November. The more we covered it over with coals, and poked it down, the more it popped. And in the middle of it all, in came the confounded gal again, and Fig. and I got in front of the fire, pretending to be drying our trowsers, or socks, or something; and then we sang, and whistled, and poked the fire tremendous, and knocked down the irons, to drown the row of the pop-popping—never was such a game; and then we asked for the recipe, because we liked it so much, ha! ha! And when I told my wife of it, she says it was a sav'ry

omlette. ‘Then,’ says I, ‘my dear, if you don’t want to drive me right out of the house you won’t ever give me a sav’ry omlette for dinner.’”

Thus he clacked on, laughing, eating, bobbing up and down, but never easy or quiet for a minute.

The rumble of wheels was now heard, and, looking out in the grey of the morning, they saw the cart waiting for them at the door, and now, breakfast being over, and a slight thimbleful of some amber-coloured cordial having been administered, they deposited the guns, &c., and finally, themselves in the chaise-cart—Newton snug in the bottom,—and off they started, behind “as good a pony as ever stepped,” as Mr. Tomkins described him, and no doubt the pony was a good one, for when they got clear of London a little, Tomkins betted Waggle a bottle of wine that he’d trot the next seven miles in thirty-two minutes; and he did it, too, with seven or eight seconds

to spare. The fact is, the little brute was not a trotter, but a runner, and went scuffling along over the level road, at a prodigious pace. As they left London, the houses cut clear and crisp through the morning light. The rain-drops now and then plashed from the houses, but the road was tolerably dry. Market-carts came rolling up, packed with cabbages to an extent that it was a marvel how they got to market at all. A sleepy, lazy milk-maid was just moving along, as if she were as yet scarce awake to her employment. Presently they spun past houses, where a waggon or market-cart paused for a time, whilst its driver partook of early purl within. The pace was, however, not noticed by Newton, because he was sitting at full length in the bottom of the cart, with his back reclining against the tail-board, and a very comfortable warm berth he found it, with lots of nice fresh straw to burrow under.

In due time they reached Groundslow,

where they pulled up at the Bold Dragoon, and the proprietor thereof, an old friend of Tomkins, came out and greeted them heartily, and then "Old Bung," as he was called, came out, and greeted them too, a weather-beaten, wide-awake, stringey-looking yeoman, was old Bung, possessed of a reckless, devil-may-care humour, mingled, oddly enough, with a dry, caustic shrewdness.

"How do, Mr. Tawmkins? How do, *sir*? Ye ha'rnt got rid o' them beauty spots o' your'n, yet." (Referring to two or three rather prominent pimples Tomkins was troubled with, and which usually shewed somewhat plainly on a cold morning, like plums in a pudding). "Blood beant into sarcilation yet. You'll be better arter you've had a bottle or so of gin, and a gallon or two of yale," and seeing Tomkins about to sit down, he popped a piece of furze he held in his hand into the chair, for him to sit down upon, and then laughed immensely at Tomkins' disgust. He was as

full of mischief and practical jokes, as if he had been at least forty years younger than he was.

Then Sam, the man with the ferrets, came in, and his assistant, with the mattock and spade, came in, and *they* “didn’t mind having a drop of somethin’,” and finally the procession marched forth—Mr. Tomkins and Waggetail, magnificent in double-barrels, and Newton with his single, and the host of the Bold Dragoon, and old Bung with a spud, and Sam and his assistant, with a mongrel cur or two—good at rabbits—bringing up the rear. Presently they strike off the road, and arrive at the warren, a tolerably extensive one, all gravel-pits and mounds, with furze and heath pretty thickly dispersed. First they walk over the warren to fall in with any outlying bunnies. Newton was now in a parlous state between ignorance and excitement. What he was to see, and what he was to do, when he did see it, he knew not; but pre-

sently there was a "Yap," from one of the dogs, and a rabbit ran almost between his legs across a bit of open, through a bush and a hole some twenty yards off.

"There he is—there he is," said Newton, thinking he had done something rather clever in seeing the rabbit at all.

"Why didn't you shoot him?" asked Tomkins, severely.

"Well—he—he—was running away so fast."

"Quite right, sir. You always wait till they sits still," said old Bung.

"Of course I shall," quoth Newton.

Presently there was another yap. "Bang," went Mr. Tomkins's gun, and a bunny came to grief.

Next Mr. Waggletail had a chance, and he very nearly shot one of the dogs, but declared he hit the rabbit, nevertheless, and old Bung verified it by saying, "that he never see a rabbit so frightened in all his life, and he shouldn't think there was a whole bone left in

his body!" at which Mr. Waggetail smiled approvingly to himself, shook his head, loaded his gun, and prepared anew for action. And at length, having walked all over the warren, and done another rabbit to death by the assistance of every gun and every dog—they commenced serious operations. A mound was sought for, a fresh-used hole picked out, and a lined ferret put in. (Intense excitement).

"He's on 'em," quoth Sam.

"He is," said Tom, the assistant.

"Rumble, rumble, rumble!"

"Look out."

"Woan't bolt, Tawmas."

"Doan't think as a wull, Sam," and down went the mattock and spade, and to work they fell, digging, and they dug, and they dug, and they dug, and they worked and sweated, and threw up clod after clod, and presently Sam's head and shoulders were down into the hole.

“A con just touch 'un; but can't get nar a grip;” and as Sam made another effort to thrust his arm a few inches further into the hole, part of the bank gave way, and down he slipped, head foremost, into the deep trench they had dug, with his heels in the air.

“Ouf—ouf—poof;” Sam struggled to extricate himself, but he couldn't manage it, and he only slipped further on and brought down a load of gravel and rubbish about his half-buried head and shoulders.

“Better pull him out, I think,” said Mr. Tomkins, seeing that Sam was literally in a fix.

“Think not,” said old Bung—“seems very comforable where he be. Better liv' 'im bide, and give the rabbit a chance.”

But Sam's heels-began flourishing and kicking about in such fashion that it indicated partial suffocation. Whereupon the landlord and Tomkins each seized a leg, old Bung looking on deprecatingly meanwhile, and they

pulled him out gasping, but with the rabbit, which he had never let go of, in his fist.

“Nigh squeak that,” said Sam, who was nearly purple, shaking the dust from his shoulders, ears, and hair. “Whoy didn’t no one pull us out afore?”

“Wall, Sam,” answered old Bung, “I never *did* see a man smawthered in a bury, and I was reyather curious about it, and you did seem so oncommon comfortable, a’ dancin’ the polkas with yer heels uppermost, that I wur a thinkin’ how much yer wife ’ud a liked to a seen ye.”

Sam bestowed a *glance* upon his master; but he didn’t say anything; probably, like the celebrated parrot, he thought all the more.

Meanwhile Tom had placed another ferret in a hole on the further side of a large gravel-pit, on the brink of a corner of which Newton was standing, and Mr. Waggletail had gone round to superintend the operation. Out

popped a rabbit and ran across towards Newton's corner—"Bang" went Mr. Waggletail's fowling-piece, missing the rabbit by yards, but making the gravel fly in all directions, very handy to Newton. It was unpleasantly close, and so Newton thought; but not knowing exactly whether that wasn't all right and the proper sort of thing to expect, as he was not shot, he said nothing.

"My eye!" said old Bung, quietly, "There'll *be* some fun now, afore the day's over."

Then they went to another hole, and again the ferret was laid up, and another digging process gone through—Mr. Tomkins being up to his shoulders in it, striving to handle the rabbit — presently, as they were all waiting, with guns cocked, and intense expectation, old Bung, who had taken a little tour by himself amongst the bushes, came up to Newton, and said softly :—

"This way, sir, there's a rabbit a sitting in

that bush; I can see him from here—you'll have a beautiful shot at him."

"Where? where?" asked Newton, excitedly.

"There. Don't ye see him?"

"What! that little grey spot there, just under the furze-bush?"

"That's him," said old Bung, as regardless of grammar as Ingoldsby's "Jack-daw of Rheims." "You go, and show 'em how to do it;" and he walked away towards the hole, while Newton, all flushed and eager, crept softly up to within about twenty yards, and then, taking a steady aim, fired.

"What's that?" asked old Bung, with apparent surprise. Newton did not return immediately, and when they looked up, they saw him approaching rather sheepishly, with the ruins of his friend Tomkins' bran new grey felt wideawake, which he had nearly blown away, in his hand, it having been carefully *placed* by old Bung, who seeing it fall

from Tomkins's head during his efforts at the hole, *secured* it secretly for the purpose. Of course everybody laughed immensely at this, except Newton and Tomkins, who could not by any means be brought to see the force of the joke, particularly Tomkins.

“W'all, strikes me, Musser Taumpkins, you ought to be uncommon rejoiced you hadn't a got your head in it,” said old Bung, by way of consolation.

However, Sam's wife, coming out into the field with a basket of comestibles a few minutes afterwards, managed to pin up the worst of the rents, and Tomkins grumblingly placed it upon his head, “A regler wentilator,” as old Bung denominated it; which, as the day was cold, and the wind rather keen, was not desirable at all, particularly as it gave poor old Tomkins a bad cold for two or three weeks afterwards. But nothing could check old Bung's propensity for mischief.

After this, they tried several more holes,

but the rabbits would not bolt, and it resolved itself into a day's "navigating," and they made several *very severe cuttings*, with *several severe gradients* in the mounds, in the course of which they managed to secure ten or more rabbits.

Then they had lunch in a neglected gravel-pit, with more practical jokes from old Bung; after that, they had another hour or two's "navigating," and then they turned some of the rabbits, which they had kept alive, down on an open space, to be shot at by the *sportsmen*; in which exploit Mr. Waggletail greatly distinguished himself. They placed themselves in a row, about twenty yards apart, so that the rabbit should have as little chance as possible. A rabbit was placed before Mr. Waggletail, who stood in the centre, some five yards from him, and before the poor wretch had hopped a yard, he blew it all to pieces, pluming himself greatly on having "shot one running." One or two more were then demo-

lished, in a more reasonable fashion, and next, one was placed before him, which had evidently received some injury, as it could not run, but hopped and rolled over, struggled up, and again fell. It was going towards Mr. Tomkins, who was waiting with the intent to kick it over and knock it on the head, when, as it had blindly approached within a yard of his feet, "bang" went Waggletail's gun again; cutting up the gravel and mud, and sending it flying all over Tomkins.

"Hallo! Why, confound it. What the dev—"

"I've done him," quoth Waggletail, as the unlucky bunny breathed his last.

"Done him! You deuced near 'did' me."

"Nonsense," said Waggletail; "it was'nt anywhere near you."

"War'nt within *a yard* on him," said old Bung. "What's he a makin' a row about? The gentleman knowed what he was about.

Capital shot, sir," continued Bung, gammoning Waggletail on to mischief.

"Yes, as if I should go to shoot anywhere near *him!*" said Waggletail, in the most convincing manner imaginable.

"Well, I'm hanged!" gasped Tomkins; "it's a mercy my legs weren't as much like cullenders as my hat is. Why, look here! There's the rabbit—there's the flock—there's the gravel—not shoot near me! why, it's a mercy you didn't lame me for life."

"Yards wide, yards, *I* could see."

"See! confound you; what did you want to shoot at the poor broken-backed beggar at all for?"

"You war'nt *within a yard* of him," said old Bung, quietly fomenting the row.

"Of course not. I'm blowed if I come out shooting with him again," said Waggletail, getting quite tiffed.

"I'll take deuced good care you don't," roared Tomkins, getting out of temper, and

so the matter went on, till it gradually subsided into growls.

At length, having got as many rabbits as they could, the afternoon growing cold, and everybody being tired of *digging*, they once more returned to the Bold Dragoon, where they regaled themselves upon the leg of mutton and its adjuncts, and after that they smoked a little, and they drank a little, and one or two strangers dropping in, they had a song or two, and a toast or two; until it became time to depart, when they betook themselves to the chaise-cart once more, in a greatly amended condition, and with cigars and a good deal of noisy chat, superinduced by the aforesaid liquids, with the singing and spouting, they in good time, got them back to the great Babel once more, having taken a most friendly and forgiving leave of that pertinacious and mischief-loving old sinner, old Bung.

CHAPTER IV.

NEWTON FALLS IN WITH AN OLD FRIEND.

TIME passed on, and Newton became a promising young man in the city. His father took him into partnership, and the firm prospered. He frequented mild evening parties in the neighbourhood of Brixton, where careful mammas with marriageable daughters patronised him. He was blessed with a weak tenor voice, and sung duets with musical young ladies, and informed the company generally that "All was well," and that he "Knew a bank," &c., after which he would sometimes request to know "What the wild waves were saying," and so forth. He became great in the polka, but not being a frequenter

of casinos he found the *deux temps* difficult; and he led altogether a very harmless, and possibly useful, existence. But a change was destined to come "o'er the spirit of his dream." And so it fell out that, being in hungry mood one cloudy November afternoon, he sought one of those ancient hostelries which abound in the city, where wits in by-gone ages were wont to congregate, and which even now are famed for their good cheer.

The name of this temple of Heliogabalus and Bacchus combined was the Slate and Pickaxe; and the Slate and Pickaxe could turn out juicy steaks, succulent chops, kidneys and sausages, such as can be met with only in the city. The potatoes which accompanied these viands were especial marvels—such magnificent, tempting roots, bursting with flouriness! There was a legend about these potatoes attached to the Slate and Pickaxe, to the effect that the proprietor had an estate comprising hundreds of acres, where nothing

but these identical potatoes were cultivated. Potatoe disease, bless you! potatoe disease never troubled the Slate and Pickaxe farm, even in its very worst days. Slate and Pickaxe tubers scorned to yield to such weaknesses, and continued to turn up in the good old-fashioned way, without spick or speck.

Mr. Dogvane had *used* the house all his life, and Newton, like a dutiful son, trod reverently in his father's footsteps.

Up an alley, under an archway, past a church-door—you couldn't see anything of the church but the door, part of a window, and some iron railings, within which were neglected graves, defaced with brickbats, tin kettles, and other rubbish. In the midst shot up a mouldy sycamore, which struggled with the smoke above and the rottenness below to put forth a faint appearance of spring, when summer was almost over; but it was bare enough now, and black enough too. People wondered, as they passed, how it ever grew to

such a size there—not that it was particularly large, but it looked larger than it was from being out of place.

Round a corner, past a bright window filled with raw chops, steaks, kidneys, and lemons, amidst which a solitary hare sat in a form such as she never could have occupied in life without first breaking her back. She was flanked by a dish of skinned soles, and another of whittings engaged in the apparently difficult feat of swallowing their own tails. Past a bar, replete and shining with glass, pewter, brass, and beer-engines, behind which stood the Slate and Pickaxe himself, who reminded you forcibly of a baron of beef in a white apron, bowing with stately politeness to his, or rather its, customers. On past the bar, round another corner, and you enter a dark apartment filled up with boxes—smell of cookery and gas; strange thing about that room, the gas never was supposed to go out; no windows—though there had originally been

one. Hear what the Slate himself says of that window.

“Bricked up because of the churchyard, sir. Pretty prospect, I do assure you, before it was bricked up; grass and trees—quite the country; even hear leaves rustle sometimes; five-and-thirty of my oldest customers,” continues the Slate, “buried there. I used to smoke my pipe, and look out on it from one of the upper windows, till I grew quite sentimental over the graves. But that was in the good old time. Oh, dear, no,” he says, in answer to a question, “they don’t bury there now. Haven’t for a long time. I had hoped to lay my bones there, so as to be among old friends, and near the old place. There was a somethin’—a sort of a fancy like, when I got a musing, that I should be able to hear the eatin’ and drinkin’ goin’ on. But a parcel of innovators come and shut it up—much good may it do’em! That earth had a wonderful habit, such as I never see in any other earth.

It growed, sir,—actilly it growed. I've knowed it grow an inch and three-quarters up them lower panes in a year. Malicious people said it was the dead bodies; but that's all nonsense. It wasn't nothing of the kind. It was the uncommon fertil natur' of the soil. Look at that tree!—the pride o' the court, I call it; you won't see sich a tree as that any where else. Well, the soil couldn't grow things fast enough, so it took to and growed its ownself. But people *did* complain; there's always some as will. They wouldn't sit at that end of the room, so I was forced to have it bricked up. Great blow! all comes of innovation. They said it took away their appetites. Why, I could sit at that very winder and eat—'Three steaks, one chop, and sausage, and—*That* steak pudding.' ” (The latter part of this speech would be addressed to a hole in the wall, whence ran a pipe which communicated with the cookery, as three or four customers entered, whose

appetites and wants he had known for years.) Such was often the theme of conversation with mine host of the Slate—or, as he was familiarly termed by city wits, “The Slate.” Newton entered, took his accustomed corner, and the ubiquitous William waited for orders in the twinkling of a bedpost—a period of time well understood, though not set down in the tables.

“*The pudding!*” said Newton shortly, as he took up the supplement of the *Times*, and read abstractedly.

The pudding appeared. Ye who have eaten in youthful days an indigestible mass, composed of untearable steak, surrounded by a perfect Malakoff of a crust, attend! You have not eaten real steak-pudding, if your mouths water not at the recollection. Take—but no, I dare not give the recipe. A hundred cooks would conspire against my life; I should walk, sleep, and eat in terror of tough steaks, tainted kidneys, &c. &c.; for

the rest of my natural life, slow assassination through my digestion, by means of unwholesome viands, would be my portion. I can do no more than hint vaguely at kidneys and oysters. Mark how the gravy wells out at the first application of the fork. Observe the delicate and impalpable nature of the crust: it melts in the mouth without mastication. We will not dwell upon it, lest some of our readers chance to be hungry. Newton ate it—ay, every bit, and Apicius might have envied him.

Newton waited for the cheese, and looked round. Opposite to him, but hidden behind the out-spread *Times*, sat some one—he had not yet had an opportunity of scanning the individual's face; and subsequently, being engrossed with the pudding, he had scarcely observed him. But this gentleman, whoever he was—and he was a young man, good-looking and well-dressed—had once or twice glanced curiously and scrutinisingly at New-

ton over the top of the paper. Newton having finished the pudding, his opposite neighbour once more glanced at him, and coughed slightly, as if to attract attention. Newton looked at him—their eyes met. The intelligence of mutual recognition gradually spread over their faces, and “What! Ted, old fellow!” and “Why! Newton, old boy!” burst from both simultaneously. It was his quondam schoolmate, Ted Bowers. There was great shaking of hands, in the midst of which Newton hailed William, “Bottle of the forty-five port—a friend of mine, William.”

“Glad to see him, sir,” said William, patronisingly, looking at Ted as if he were some new and delicate species of chicken just imported.

“Take it up to the Falcon, William.”

“*The* forty-five, sir—yes, sir; you shall, sir. You wos always a good judge, from a boy you wos, Mr. Newton. ‘Little but good, says you. So was the old un afore you, so he

was; 'little but good,' says he; 'half a pint of the best'—I like a pint myself—Yes, sir, you shall." And away went William to the cellar, while our two friends mounted the stairs and entered a room, on the door of which in white letters was the word Falcon. The port made its appearance in great state, and was of course approved of highly. Then came the revelations and remembrances of former years, and "What had become of Jones;" and how "Smith was married to a native princess in Madagascar; and while Brown had ten children and a wife—and such a one, too! Robinson was unmarried, and Walker died of yellow fever in the West Indies, and Thomson was murdered by Dyak pirates—you know, it was in the paper—and his ears and teeth were brought home by Wilson, who married the corn-chandler's daughter—You know old Johnson's daughter; Hoppety Johnson's sister. You recollect Hoppety—dot, and go one—contracted leg,

and all that. Wilson used to chaff him about his pretty sister, and say that if she'd plenty of tin he'd marry her; and don't you remember how Wilson used to threaten Hoppety that he'd pull his leg, if he didn't help him to run away with his sister." "And he actually married *her*, after all!" "Married her, ah! and got 40,000*l.* with her." "Not a bad coup." Thus the revelations went on, mingled with laughter and clinking glasses. *The* pistol, you may be sure, was not forgotten. All their prospects were discussed. How Ted was waiting for a commission; how he was afraid he was too old, but as there was a talk of war, perhaps that would be overlooked, &c. Amidst all this the bottle came to an end, and something warm followed, with some of *those* Caçadores regalias; and it was all very jolly and pleasant.

At length, when they parted, Newton found that he had engaged himself to bring his gun! and dog!! on the day after to-morrow to the

livery-stables where Ted's cart was; and Ted had promised, on the other part, to drive him down to Crookham, his family's place, for a little shooting, &c.

CHAPTER V.

TREATS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

THE next day was a busy one for Newton. He had promised to bring his gun and his dog! A gun he had certainly—the one he acquired from Mr. Shecabs; but he had somewhere heard a single gun denominated a poker; so that wouldn't do. He mentioned his difficulty to William the waiter, who solved it for him by lending him a very tolerable double Lancaster, which he had taken of "a party" in consideration of a debt. But a dog! Such a thing had never been seen inside No. 7, Prospect-terrace, Brixton, for Newton's father and mother had an antipathy to the whole canine race; and had Mrs. Dogvane fancied that her Newton—the apple of her eye—

possessed such a thing in secret, she would have been tormented to death, sleeping and waking, by dreams of hydrophobia, mad dogs, feather-beds, &c. Accordingly, Newton had never owned one. Now, however, a dog must be obtained somehow. He had tacitly acquiesced in the fiction of his possessing a dog; and, at all hazards, the fiction must be made fact. Accordingly, William named one Mr. Tightner, who dwelt in the neighbourhood of the New-road, as “a likely place for a sportin’ dog”—where he could hire one for a week, probably; and forthwith away posted Newton towards the New-road. Passing down the Strand, his eye was attracted by a gorgeous style of shooting-jacket, ticketed 35*s.* 6*d.* “Ah!” thought Newton, “a pretty mess I should have been in, if I had not seen this.” Newton stopped—alas for Newton!

“You have ready-made shooting-jackets here,” he said to the proprietor, who stood bowing.

“The largest and choicest selection in London ”

“That’s a lie,” thought Newton, looking round the confined premises. “But no matter, if he has *one* that’ll do for me; it will answer as well as if he really had the 25,000, as per placard.” And the proprietor had one which *did* for him—but of that hereafter. The one which had attracted Newton’s eye was unhooked; it was a glaring, staring, rainbow plaid—blue, green, red, yellow, purple, and white.

“Sweet thing, sir,” quoth the proprietor, displaying it.

Newton would have objected that it was too brilliant; but he was knocked down by the information “That plaids was all the thing with Prince H’Albert, the Nobs, and the rest of the Royal family. And gents in the ’Ighlands wore nothing else but those identical plaids, which was called the Macdoodle tartan.” The jacket was tried on. It was much too large;

but he was again assured "that it was made for Lord Tomnoddy, who was just Newton's size and cut, and he'd a ordered it loose and full for freedom of haction." Of course he was gammoned into purchasing it, for, in spite of Newton's wish to see some of the other 24,999, he could not get a sight of them; and he was finally persuaded that a complete suit of the same stuff "was the regler thing" (the proprietor having bought a damaged remnant of it cheap); so he gave orders for trowsers and waistcoat of the same to be sent home the ensuing morning.

A cap and a tie of other gorgeous plaids were now forced on him, and "Boots—some of our registered anti-fluvials, Mr. Sneek," said the proprietor. But Newton made a stand against the anti-fluvials; he had little faith in them. Still it wouldn't do. Anti-fluvials with bladder lining, waterproof something or other, and gutta percha something or other else, were stuck into him, and he was

sent away minus the best part of a ten-pound note.

Having arrived at the New-road, Newton found out Mr. Tightner's canine repository. It was held at the dirtiest house, in the dirtiest by-lane, leading out of the dirtiest street, in the New-road. Newton entered a small shop encumbered with bird-cages and birds, living and dead, badgers, rat-dogs, foxes, and many other specimens of natural history, which, with a strong flavour of tobacco, rabbits, rats, stables, sewers, cellars, aniseed, and gin, almost choked not only the place but the unwary visitor. He was informed by a very dirty old woman, who was a fit ornament to the concern, "That Tightner were at 'ome, and he were wormin' some puppies, but 'ud come presently." A screaming parrot at Newton's back commenced a horribly discordant croak. "Mother Tight," yelled the bird—"Mother Tight—Old Mother Faggot, keep me out in the cold—Oh you d——l—

Tightner's drunk—You're another—Ha! ha! ha!" These sentences the bird vociferated again and again with astonishing volubility, winding up with a perfectly fiendish shout of laughter as Newton turned round.

"Oh you d—l," said Mrs. Tightner, shaking her fist at the bird; and Poll echoed her, as she went out grumbling. The parrot evidently was in the habit of repeating scraps of the connubial intercourse which passed between Mr. and Mrs. Tightner. What a wicked parrot it was! And no sooner did Poll open, than each of the other live specimens of dogs, birds, &c. &c., lent his share towards the general uproar.

Mr. Tightner here appeared in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a pipe. He was a thought dirtier than Mrs. Tightner, and consequently two thoughts dirtier than anything else within a hundred yards or so of his abode. Mr. Tightner needs no description. He is a well-known subject. Newton made known his

business, and Mr. Tightner, without a word, led the way, through a dark passage, into a narrow paved yard surrounded by dog-kennels. A fierce bull-dog made a dash at Newton's legs; but, receiving a skilfully administered kick on the stomach from the heavily-ironed toe of Mr. Tightner's ankle-jack, he thought better of it, and retired to his hutch. Sundry other suspicious terriers and hungry-looking bulls made overtures to Newton's calves, and a general howling, barking, and growling ensued; but Newton kept well out of reach.

"There you air," said Mr. Tightner, stopping before a kennel, and dragging forth a mongrelish-looking, coarse-sterned pointer.

"Oh! that's the dog?" said Newton.

"That's him—Mungo's his name; and a ten-pun note's his price. You won't ditto him, search London over. I knows if I took 'im to Lord Stilton I cud get fifteen for 'im."

Newton, in his usual style of reasoning,

ventured to wonder "why he didn't take him to Lord Stilton. Mr. Tightner looked narrowly at his customer, suspecting an intention to chaff on the part of Newton; but, seeing that he was perfectly serious, he kicked a terrier back into his kennel, which was creeping up to Newton with sinister intent. "Ah, would yer? That's the artfullest warment that is, as ever I had on these premises. Jem Burn's breed, he is; he'd a had you jist above the boot in another seckind."

"Would he?" said Newton, involuntarily moving his legs.

"I believe yer," answered Mr. Tightner; "he's a curiosity, he is; so gallus artful, he is. Well, yer see, about the pinter, 'taint what I *could* git, but what I can. Lord Stilton's out o' town, and therefore I'm obligated to give the dorg away."

Newton explained that his object was not to buy; and after considerable chaffering and "puttin it to Newton as a gentleman," and

the usual amount of shifts, dodges, &c., a bargain was struck. Newton was to pay 30*s.* a week for the hire of the dog, and to pay 5*l.* deposit on him. "The fiver, in course, I returns in case *no 'arm 'appens* to him—that you're certain on." Poor Newton! the idea of Tightner returning any money! or of any money being a week in his possession without his spending it!

"Very good," said Newton. Newton might be a sharp man of business in the City, but he was a baby, a lamb, to that wolf of a Tightner.

Newton paid the money, and, as a matter of business, asked for a receipt.

"Ye see, sir," answered Tightner, "I carnt write."

"Oh, I'll write it," said Newton, "and you can scratch your mark against it."

"Ah, but then I carnt read," said Tightner, with an expressive wink; "and how am I to know wot's on the paper?"

“ You may trust to my honour, I should think,” said Newton, indignantly.

“ Gammon !” said Tightner.—“ Mr.—Mr.”

“ Dogvane,” said Newton.

“ Dogwane,” repeated Tightner, “ take my hadvice—don’t you never ’ave nothink to do with ’onour, or you’ll be broke, as sure as my name’s Tightner. It’s a bad game, is ’onour—and trust’s nothink but a wusser. Now look ’ere, this is a matter of business. Not readin’ nor writin’; I ’ates paper; I’ve got the money—you’ve got the dorg. Bring me the dorg, safe and sound, mind you, and there’s the money. I can’t say no fairer. S’pose I dies bankrupts” (fancy Tightner bankrupting! Even Newton could not help smiling at the idea), “ still you’ve all the best of it. There’s the dorg, and you could keep ’m.” With this reasoning Newton was obliged to be content. So, calling for a cab, and refusing Mr. Tightner’s kind invite “ to stand something,” he tied a handkerchief round Mungo’s neck,

forced him into the cab, and drove off exulting in his acquisition; while Mr. Tightner took a solemn pantomimic sight at them, as they drove off, and performed a triumphant double shuffle behind the cage of the parrot, whose last words were "Tightner's drunk—Ha! ha!" Having thus given vent to his satisfaction, Mr. Tightner proceeded to finish getting intoxicated—he was usually more or less so—and continued in that state for some days, until the last sixpence of the 6*l.* 10*s.* was dissipated.

CHAPTER VI.

A ROW IN THE HOUSE.

“MY dear,” said Mrs. Dogvane, to Mr. Dogvane, “haven’t you observed something strange—something very strange about New all day?”

“Well, my dear, yes. I think I may say that I saw him in one of the most remarkable jackets an hour or two since that—”

“I don’t mean that, Mr. Dogvane. But that’s always your way.”

“What’s always my way, dear?”

“Why, that—”

“Which? What? ’Pon my life! my dear, I don’t understand you.”

“That’s just what I’m saying, you always *pretend* that you don’t understand me, and go off to something else. I was asking you if you hadn’t noticed something remarkable in New’s manner, and you begin to talk about his shooting-jackets.” (Mrs. Dogvane, when she grew a little excited, invariably pluralised things, as if there were several of them in question.)

“You didn’t say in his manner, my love; you said about him. And of course I thought you referred to that tartan affair, which says as plain as it can, ‘Saxon I am, and a regular do!’”

“Pshaw! fiddle! There you are at your puns now. Well, but haven’t you, my dear, observed that—”

“My dear, I certainly have noticed that he appeared restless; that he has gone out of the room, and come in again, oftener than usual. But, as he is going to this Mr. Bowers’s on a sporting visit to-morrow, I thought

he was anxious about his preparations, and was packing bags, and cleaning guns, and so forth. But I don't know that I have noticed anything more."

"Ah! then, I have," said the anxious mother. "I'm sure there's something the matter, and that he's not well. I heard him go round the back of the house towards the dust-hole just now; and I heard him whistling; and then all of a sudden he stopped; and then I heard him say as distinctly as possible, 'Poor fellow!' and something about 'lying down.' Besides, he looks so excited."

"Fancy! my dear—fancy!"

"Oh! of course it is. That's just what you said, if you recollect, before he had the measles. You remember that I said I thought he looked flushed, and you said that wome were always thinking something."

"Did I, my dear? Perhaps I was right."

"You did. Those were your very words, when that dear child was four years and three

months old; and I replied that I was sure he was sickening for something, and you said, 'Fancy! my dear—fancy!' just as you say it to-night."

"Well, really, my love, I'm very sorry. What do you think he's sickening for now? If I might give an opinion, I should say, after that tea he made, it was an attack of muffins." Mrs. Dogvane rose and left the room, saying that "men hadn't a bit of feeling;" and Mr. Dogvane resumed his paper, which he had laid down.

Sleep prevaieth. Night has covered the earth with its shroud. A silence, broken only by the distance-deadened roll and roar of the hoarse, dissipated city, reigns around; but this sound is so sleepless, so ever constant, that it becomes part, parcel, and pulse of the very silence itself. When will London be thoroughly silent? When it shall have become the city of the dead, and not till then; for where there is life there is sound. There-

fore, when we say that silence reigned around, we only mean to say that there was nobody speaking, and that the silence was subject to certain conditions. We stand in a bed-chamber—start not, reader; don't be alarmed. This is a domestic, connubial apartment, and the parties occupying it have every lawful right so to do. There is a gentle rustle, and the soft, regular, nasophonous music of a lady's organ might be heard playing tenor to the hoarser bass tone of a manly instrument, which, ever and again, after running through a complicated passage, ended with a chord-like snort, and, after a brief rest, began again. Suddenly there arose without a cry—a yell so loud, so piercing, so prolonged—that the nasophons ceased, as though some magic spell had been suddenly dissolved; and the proprietors of the two instruments, after various contortions, sat up in bed, with alarm depicted on their countenances, which would have presented to any

one who might have seen them the features of Mr. and Mrs. Dogvane.

“Bless my heart!” quoth Mrs. D.

“Bless my soul!” quoth Mr. D.

“What is it? What could it be?” inquired both.

“Ya-hoo-o-oo,” was repeated without.

“Dear me! How very unked,” said Mrs. D.

“Very unearthly, I must say,” said Mr. D.

“A-hoo-oo-o.”

“For all the world it sounds like a dog howling,” said Mrs. D.

“That’s what it is—a beastly cur,” said Mr. D., flopping down on the pillow again, and addressing himself to sleep.

“Ya-hoo-oo-o.”

“I declare it sounds close under our window,” quoth Mrs. D.

“Oh! confoundedly close!” quoth Mr. D.

“Ya-hoo-oo.”

“My dear, do get up, and just look out of the window, and see what’s the matter; I’m sure there’s somebody dying somewhere!” said Mrs. D.

“Oh! ah! I daresay! Get up and open the window in November? Dying be hanged! Let ’em die then—I’m not going to be blown into fiddle-strings because people will die. How can I help their dying?”

“A-hoo-hoo-hoo.”

“Oh dear! bother the dog.”

“D—n the brute! I wish he’d a brick-bat round his neck,” said Dogvane, viciously, as, with a turn and a twist, he pulled his night-cap over his ears, and once more tried all he knew to sleep. But the sound wouldn’t be shut out; it came again and again, “A-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo,” as if it never meant leaving off.

Mr. Dogvane once more, like “Shove” the barber, “sat on his antipodes in bed.” Another howl, and “Heavens and earth,

it's too bad!" and Mr. Dogvane dashed out of bed, rushed to the window, and threw it up violently. A chill wind swept into the apartment and playfully fluttered Mr. Dogvane's shirt-tails, diffusing, from head to heel, one universal shiver. But Mr. Dogvane's was not the only window open; for when he put out his head (which he did cautiously enough) he saw several others—in fact a row of white nightcaps, all up the back windows of the terrace—protruding inquiringly and anathematising; while a general chorus of "Infernal brutes," "Disgraceful nuisances," &c., made itself heard.

Mr. Dogvane looked to the right and to the left, and saw nothing. "Ya-woo-oo"—why, where could it be? It seemed directly under his nose.

"Mungo! Mùn-gò! Lay down, sir-r-r!" said a voice over Mr. Dogvane's head.

Mr. Dogvane looked up. The speaker

was his son Newton. He looked down, and beheld the nuisance in his own back yard—nay, in his own, his very own dusthole—in the shape of Mungo. A volley of “Shamefuls,” “Disgracefuls,” “Abominables,” and “Infernals” was hurled at Mr. Dogvane’s nightcap. The situation was not agreeable, the wind piercing cold ; so he did the wisest thing he could do under the circumstances—he shut the window.

There was evidently a dog, a *protégé* of his son’s on the premises. It would be all explained in the morning ; so he merely put his head outside the door, and ordered Newton to “Go down at once and quiet that brute ;” and then, getting into bed, he grinned pleasantly at the thought of the delightful task he had set his son, as he heard Newton knocking his shins against the banisters on his way down to the back door.

Mungo had been smuggled into the house ;

and Newton, knowing his mother's prejudice, had concealed him in the dusthole, where he had been perpetually supplied by Newton, throughout the evening, with broken victuals, &c., to keep him quiet. But the bones were demolished, and Mungo missed the genial atmosphere and company of Mr. Tightner's kennel; and thus he made his moan, and introduced himself to the notice of the inhabitants of Prospect Terrace. Newton once more groped his way to the larder, and seizing in the dark the first thing he could get hold of, which was a carcass of something, conveyed it to Mungo, with many "Poor fellows!" and "Good old chaps!" in the midst of which, the "good old chap," scenting an edible, snatched it from Newton's hand, and retreated with it to the congenial dusthole, growling.

Towards morning Mungo favoured the neighbourhood with another serenade, which lasted until cock-crow; and the consequence

was that nine notes of indignant expostulation and one notice of action for nuisance made their appearance upon Mr. Dogvane's breakfast-table before nine o'clock.

"Martha," said Mrs. Dogvane, "broil the back and one of the legs of the goose for your master's breakfast. Cayenne, and a slice of lemon."

"Please 'm," quoth Martha, after a short interval, "there aint no goose here."

"Nonsense!" answered her mistress, "I saw it there on the right-hand shelf myself last night. Do as I tell you."

"But it aint here," persisted Martha.

"Not there!"

"No, 'm; its clean gone and stole'd away."

"Don't tell me! you know I had the cat made away with only last week, and now we haven't got one at all; therefore, if you haven't given it to the policeman or the *chaps*, it must be there."

For this mean and base insinuation, Martha gave warning on the spot, and muttered something about "Debaging slaves, Uncle Tom's Cabbingses, and Horsetrailer."

"But what can have come of it?" continued Mrs. Dogvane.

"Sure I don't know," jerked out Martha; "I don't find no pleegemen and chaps in board and lodgins. Leastways, if I did, I'm sure they wouldn't get fat enough to be made prize oxes on out o' this 'ouse."

For this cruel and cutting insinuation, Martha's missus gave her warning on the spot, and called her "an ungrateful hussy." And yet Martha and her mistress were as good friends as ever again in two hours' time, and did not entertain the least idea of parting.

Newton heard the colloquy. Could it have been the goose he had pitched on and conveyed to Mungo in the night? He owned at breakfast-time, in the course of explanations, that it might have been.

Mrs. Dogvane thought that he might have chosen anything else ; but it appeared, upon enquiry, that he *had* chosen *everything* else previously ; and she was motherly and affectionate. Mr. Dogvane would have been wroth at any other time, not only at the surreptitious introduction of Mungo, but the loss of his broil. But the notes were so *very* indignant, so lofty and exacting in tone, that he grew dogged, and he remembered Newton's pleasant journey down stairs with a grim smile and much relish. And, finally, he declared that "he had a right to keep a dog, if he liked—what right had that old Cossack, Copps (one Captain Copps, late of the H. E. I. C. S), to talk about actions for nuisances ? hang him ! There wasn't a greater nuisance in the neighbourhood than he was himself. He'd a right to keep a dog. He would keep a dog. He'd see old Copps blowed but what he'd keep a dog ; and if Newton took that dog away, he'd buy another ; and if

it didn't howl often enough, he'd invent some sort of infernal machine with a spring to it, which would keep him at it every two minutes all night long. Who was old Copps, indeed!"

"And who was that Mrs. Copps," said Mrs. Dogvane.

"A captain in—"

"I don't believe he was ever a captain at all," put in Mrs. D.

"Well, a lieutenant, then, in the Bombay Horse Marines—ha! ha!"

"And his wife was part of a speculation cargo."

"The d—l take Copps," said Mr. Dogvane; to which Mrs. Dogvane replied, "that although it certainly was strong language she'd no objection." Accordingly, Captain Copps was politely informed in a note, with all sorts of compliments, that there was no law against keeping dogs, and if he felt aggrieved at it, he could retaliate by keeping another."

CHAPTER VII.

TO CROOKHAM.

CROOKHAM is a pleasant little village in Kent, some twenty miles from London; and thither our friends were bound on the ensuing afternoon. The dogcart and the roan mare were in waiting. Mungo was dragged from a cab, and with Newton's bag and guncase was hoisted up, much against his will, and forced into the depths of the cart. Newton and his friends scrambled to their seats. The cloth was withdrawn, and, at a chirrup from Ned, the roan stepped away at a good round trot, making light of the load within the cart, and of the fortunes and solid flesh of Mr. Newton Dogvane

and his friend Ned Bowers, which were for the time deposited outside it.

Newton was unused to dogcarts, and held firmly on by the rail for the first mile or so, evincing a strong disposition to clutch the reins, whenever a cart, dray, or omnibus seemed nearer to them than quite accorded with his notions of safety. Newton had been accustomed to omnibuses and cabs, and there was something solid and safe to his eyes in their ponderous weight and five-mile-an-hour pace; consequently, the lightness of the cart, and the free action of the roan mare, seemed fraught with danger to the inexperienced Newton.

“Would you like to drive, Newton?” asked Ned, upon one of those occasions when Newton had made an attempt on the reins as they whirled by an omnibus.

“Oh, dear! no, thank you,” answered Newton.

“Then, if you don’t wish to be upset, I

think, perhaps, you had better let me, as it isn't quite safe laying hold of the ribbons like you do. I know the mare, and she knows me, and you'd better leave us alone if you wish to arrive uninjured at the journey's end," said Edward, rather drily.

"My dear fellow, I beg your pardon. It was quite involuntary; I won't do it again." And Newton put a watchful curb upon his actions for the rest of the evening; though on one or two occasions, when "his heart was in his mouth," he only just succeeded in stopping himself from repeating the offence.

Clatter, clatter, rattle, rattle, they went over the stony streets. Carriages, carts, omnibuses, &c., &c., were cast behind like nothing. Anon they grew thin, and thinner still, and the steady hard roll of the turnpike told them that London was behind. Gaps began to appear between the houses, through which visions of gardens and trees appeared in the distance.

Railings and new churches gave place to hedges, with here and there a tea-garden or suburban public-house. Presently, the houses ceased altogether, though they had made a long struggle of it; hedges, trees, and green fields alone were seen; and they were upon the road.

“Now, New, I’m going to hand you the reins, while I light a weed; and as you are decidedly innocent as regards driving, all you have to do is to keep them just tight enough to feel the old mare’s mouth without checking her. Let her have her own way; she’ll go. You really ought to know how to drive, and must learn. There!” giving Newton the reins. “Now leave the whip alone, you don’t want that, nor does the old lady; for if you only dropped the lash on her back, I wouldn’t answer for the consequences. Don’t hold the reins like a tailor. Here, first and second finger—so—you don’t want a hand for each rein.” And Newton took the reins as his

friend shewed him, and let the mare go her own pace. The road was level and straight. It really seemed the simplest thing in the world. Ned lighted a cigar.

Presently a horse and cart came toiling along the road; Newton seized the off-rein in his whip hand, and pulled as if he were dragging at a nine-inch cable. Round sprung the old mare at this unwonted visitation to her grinders, and narrowly missed the ditch; she righted herself, however, pulled the wheel off the footway on which it had intruded, and went off at "score" in a smart canter.

"Don't pull her," said Ned; "let her have her run out, and she'll soon find it's all a mistake, and will calm down. If you don't let her do it her own way, she'll be fidgetty all the rest of the journey. What on earth made you pull at the rein in that fashion? A slight turn of the wrist is all that is necessary. See — thus, — that's it; you'll soon learn."

“ Oh, yes, I shall soon learn ; it’s delightfully easy.”

“ Easy as—as—bull-fighting, when you’re used to it.”

After a time, Newton, getting more “ used to it,” actually lighted a cigar with one hand, while he held the reins in the other. This was the great event of the afternoon to Newton. “ Pull up at the Marlborough’s Head.” A public-house, a huge elm-tree, whose roots seemed all above ground—an ancient sign, supposed to represent the above warrior, but which might have represented a red lion, a green dragon, a blue boar, or any other natural-historical curio to the casual observer. However, the Head drew a clear bright tap, which our friends tasted while the mare had her mouth wiped out. Presently the cigars were re-lighted, and they were once more off.

“ Eleven miles ! ” said Ned, who was just shewing Newton what the roan could do.

The road was hard, dry, and level, and the afternoon clear and bracing. The old mare's hoofs rang a musical, bell-like peal, and the wheels hummed in concert. They were making good running of it. Their spirits rose with the rapid motion, and laugh, jest, and story followed one another in quick succession. Presently, a tall, solitary pine tree appeared in the distance, flanked by a row of poplars.

“There's Crookham!” said Ned. A clump of elms just showed itself, and was left behind—a few scattered houses, a green, a church, a pond, sharp round through a gate, and a short avenue, and, “Here we are.”

A capital old-fashioned house just modernised enough not to spoil it—with old oak beams traversing in all directions such of the masonry as could be seen between the creepers, which almost smothered it. Twisted and angled chimneys of another period abounded. Ivy and clematis of a hundred years' growth, with

wonderful climbing roses, which in the summer almost decked with their blossoms the very chimneys, seemed everywhere. A front-garden, a trifle high, stiff and prim in form, but charmingly arranged, conservatory, &c., &c. But Newton had not much time to examine externals. The servant stood ready, and took the cart round.

“Will’—tie that dog up, and send Mr. Dogvane’s things up into the Punch room. There are some things for the young ladies—take them out; and a turkey for the cook—let her have it.”

Newton was now introduced by his friend to a snug little bed-room, called the Punch room, because it was completely papered with engravings from that periodical—and on every side might be seen those wonderful creations of Leech’s pencil. Here was old Briggs, having “a splendid run over a magnificent country,” with about twenty pounds of mud upon each foot. There he might have been observed at *the stee-*

ple-chase, looking remarkably queer at a very stiff thorn and paling—as the countryman informs him that “This aint the big ’un, but the big un’s just after you get out of the road, over the double post and rail, and afore you come to the brook.” Here you have the “pictur,” of a barbel, some 300lbs. weight by the lowest computation, which the host of the Angling Inn is showing to two amazed cockneys as one which “his little boy ketched jest hopposite;” and there an inimitable bit from the moors—two gentlemen with a dead grouse between them, and the “My bird, I think,” of the one, and “Belongs to me, I fancy,” of the other; both of which pithy sentences you can almost see issuing from the supposed speakers’ mouths. It was the snuggest of snug rooms. The ivy clustered closely round the window, and in the morning the birds chattered and twittered delightfully. The fire was shining brightly.

“This will do for you, old fellow, eh?” asked Ned.

“Gloriously, thank you; never was so comfortable in my life;” and Newton plumped down into a capacious “easy.”

“If you want to smoke, open that door, and the smoke ventilates through the passage beyond, at the other end of which is my room. I forgot to say there’s a bit of a hop downstairs to-night; so, when you have made yourself comfortable, we’ll have a mouthful of something here. And I’ll explain to you the territory you’ve invaded. I’ll be with you again in two minutes. Ring, if you want anything;” and away went Ned to his own room.

“By Jove!” said Newton to himself, looking round upon the unwonted comforts, “I’ve fallen in for a good thing this time; our people at home are not up to this kind of thing, so we must try and teach them when we return.” Newton had not formed altogether a correct notion of Crookham. His

ideas of the country were decidedly in favour of farming, &c. He had formed some vague notion of astonishing the natives and displaying to the Bœotian gaze the wonders of London refinement. Surely there is no animal on earth so truly, thoroughly, and naturally conceited, as a pure specimen of a Londoner. However, Newton was wise enough at once to abandon all ideas of doing anything *en grand seigneur*. He had just finished his arrangements, and satisfactorily, when his friend returned, followed by a servant who bore a tray, on which was a raised pie of fair dimensions and a bottle or two.

“Can you do upon this for the present, old fellow?” asked Ned.

“Well, I’ll try to subsist upon it for the time being,” answered Newton, spooning away at the contents of the pie at a great rate—nor was Ned far behind him—and in a very short time the pie was reduced to an almost empty crust.

“Now for a plan of the country, according to promise,” said Ned, when the eating and drinking were completed. “Imprimis, there’s the Maternity, bless her old heart! A better woman or a kinder mother doesn’t step between this and John o’Groats. Please her children, and you please her; so, as the friend of an important party in that delightful clique, you have every chance of becoming a favourite. Then there’s the governor; you’ll be sure to like him, he is such a worthy old boy. Then there’s his brother Charles—Uncle Crabb we call him—a retired army surgeon—an undeniable original. He’ll insult you, in all probability, the moment you are introduced to him, and possibly ten times a-day afterwards. But everybody knows his way, and consequently no one notices or cares about it. ‘Sweetest nut hath sourest rind;’ such is the case with Uncle Crabb; for under an apparently rough exterior lies one of the best and truest hearts that ever beat in

mortal man. He is the most inveterate enemy to humbug, and he won't make friends with you in a hurry; but when he does, you secure him for life. Next come the young ladies, my sisters. Charlotte, the eldest, is a remarkably self-possessed young woman, considerable of a beauty they say. She will win your heart while she laughs in your face; but you must be something out of the common to win hers. Bessy—my favourite—I won't tell you a word about Bessy, except that I think her the most dangerous of the three, with her dear, quiet, earnest, gentle manner—ware heart there, my boy; for nothing but the real thing will win Bessy. Cecilia, alias Sissy, alias Baby, alias Topsy, a lisping incarnation of all mischief, wild as a hawk or an unbroken colt. Then there's Trimmer, the young-ladies' maid, a weak-minded young person, who thinks her profile resembles Mary, Queen of Scots. Tell her so, and you win her good will. Tell William, the man, that you believe the old

mare could do her fourteen and a-half within the hour, and you'll find your account out in that. Ask Jewsbury, the cook, to make you one of her pork pies to take out shooting, and you'll be 'Sitch a nice gentleman, and so haffable like.'"

Master Ned's advice was not bad, for we have generally found that a little consideration of the weaknesses of those who minister to one's comfort produces a decidedly beneficial effect, go where we will—superior even to half-crowns.

"There, my boy! I've given you clear sailing directions, I think, and if you get aground it will be your own fault."

Scarcely had Ned finished this harangue, when there came a knock at the door, and William entered, holding in his hand what appeared to be a bunch of feathers.

"Please, sir," said Will, with the slightest possible grin on his face, "Missus Jewsbury wants to know if this be the turkey you said

you'd bring? and how you'd like her to cook it?" And Will held up the object he bore in his hands, displaying to their gaze a mangled mass of flesh and feathers. Newton stared at it with astonishment, as did his friend for a moment, who then broke out into a loud laugh.

"Ha! ha! ha! Poor Jewsbury! What can have befallen the turkey? for I suppose, from the appearance of the feathers, that is the turkey."

"Yes, sir, I rayther thinks it is wot's left on it, and I 'magine the genleman's pinter fell'd foul on it in the cart; for he won't eat no supper, and is blowed out terrible."

Newton looked dreadfully annoyed and upset. "Oh, that wretched Mungo!" said he. "It was only last night he devoured a goose."

"Mungo, by all that's destructive," said his friend, with another burst of laughter; "Bravo, Mungo; a goose and a turkey. He's a dog of discrimination, that Mungo of yours,

an undeniable epicure, a regular alderman of a Mungo. There, old fellow, don't look so savage over it. It was all my fault for being so indiscreet as to let them travel in such close companionship. Take it away, Will, and tell Mrs. Jewsbury I am sorry for the accident. It can't be helped; she must do as well as she can without it." And Will returned with the remains of the turkey, as Ned, with another burst of laughter, drowned his friend's apologies; and so contagious was his laughter that Newton, in spite of his annoyance, could not help joining in it. At this juncture a tall, well-looking, elderly gentleman entered the room, saying, "What on earth are you boys so uproarious about?" Ned introduced his friend to his father. The usual compliments passed; and Ned explained the cause of their merriment, with such little improvements as gave point to the story, so that it even provoked the governor's mirth. There is nothing like a good laugh for setting people at their

case; and the three gentlemen were soon chatting away, "as if," as Newton said, "he was quite one of the family."

"And now I've some good news. Here's a note of excuse from Sir John Vesey for this evening, and an invitation to any friends of mine to shoot at Dealmount with the party to-morrow. There—will that suit you to commence with?" asked Mr. Bowers.

"Not at all—oh no! We're in luck. Best covers within thirty miles, New!"

"Indeed!" said New, "that is—a—capital, you know. I'm sure *I'm* very much delighted." Newton began to feel a slight want of confidence in his prowess.

"Good shot, Mr. Dogvane?" asked the old gentleman.

"No—a—not very; that is—not at all," answered Newton, diffidently.

"Oh, that won't do. It's only your modesty prevents you from speaking highly of your skill. I don't doubt but we shall see you

double up the long tails in great style to-morrow."

"And I devoutly hope you mayn't be deceived," thought Newton. "If I don't double up any of my brother sportsmen, I shall have achieved a success."

"Well, that's my budget. You'd better be thinking about dressing, as it's half-past eight. We are early people in the country, Mr. Dogvane;" and with a nod Mr. Bowers left the room.

Newton thought it would not do to allow his friends to expect too much of him; and it would be as well to dispossess his friend's mind of any such expectations at once. Accordingly he remarked, as if in continuance of the conversation:—

"No, I'm not a very good shot—that is, not much of a one. I can hit a standing mark very well."

"Eh! what!" said Ned, looking up sharply. "Oh, I suppose you mean you are pretty good

with the rifle. Yes, I've seen many good rifle-shots indifferent in the field."

Newton saw he had made some great mistake; and, fearing to commit himself further, he held his tongue, and allowed himself to be judged by default. After this Ned retired to his own room, and, their toilets being completed, they descended.

CHAPTER VIII.

MUSIC, LIGHTS, AND LADIES.

NED drew his friend through the room, which was tolerably filled with company, and introduced him to a cheerful, pleasant-looking elderly lady—his mother, Mrs. Bowers—and then turned away to speak to some one. Newton felt awkward amongst so many strangers; he was a little embarrassed; his tie—his collar—his gloves—something or other—felt in the way. He tried to say something acceptable about the rooms, but Mrs. Bowers put it on one side; generalities were not her forte.

“ Now, Mr. Dogvane, as an old schoolfellow

and friend of my son's, I intend you and I to be great friends before you leave us; but, in the mean time, a young lady's society will be preferable to an old one's. Don't say no. It's perfectly natural, though I thank you for your politeness, and will believe that you may tolerate me at some other time. But now you must dance, and do your devoir to some fair damsel, like a gallant cavalier. Dear me! the very sight of a light-hearted, joyous dance always does me good. I wish it was the fashion to dance the minuet; I declare I would actually show these young caperers what we used to do in our days. But such very violent whirling and twirling does not suit me. Ha! ha! we can't expect our children to be as grave as ourselves, Mr. Dogvane," and the cheerful old lady laughed heartily.

Now, by one of those strange coincidences, it did happen that Newton, some two years before, having to take a part in a charade, had actually learnt a minuet, which he danced in

character on the occasion ; and his master, an elderly Frenchman, who had bestowed no little pains on him, pronounced his performance of it as passable ; so Newton jokingly remarked that, if Mrs. Bowers wanted a partner for a minuet, he should be only too delighted to be allowed to be her cavalier on the occasion.

“Nonsense, Mr. Dogvane ; you don't mean to say that you *can* dance a minuet,” said the old lady, glancing for a moment at his figure, which was slight and not ungraceful.

“Indeed, but I do,” quoth Newton.

At this moment a young lady came up and said, with a slight lisp :—

“Mamma, whereth Captain Steventh ? Tharlotte is *au déséthpoir*.”

“Silence, you minx,” said the old lady. “This is my youngest daughter, Cecilia—Little Mischief, we call her, Mr. Dogvane.” Newton bowed. “Here's Mr. Dogvane actually offering to be my cavalier in a minuet, Sissy ; and positively I've half a mind to oblige

him, if it's only to show you that what you call dancing is nothing but vulgar racing and galloping."

"Oh, Ma! what fun! You must dance a minuet. You shall dance one. Besides, you really do it so very gracefully, Ma. Oh, I'm determined you shall dance one!"—and away hurried Sissy.

"There, Mr. Dogvane, you have spoilt my peace of mind for the evening, and you must get me out of the scrape. Of course, I was only joking. But I'd better get out of the way, or nothing short of a minuet will satisfy that mischievous puss. Charles," she continued to a gentleman who was passing, "this is Edward's friend, Mr. Dogvane—my brother Charles. Will you see that Mr. Dogvane gets a partner?" and she bowed, and turned away.

The gentleman, whom she had introduced Newton to, was a tall, thin, weather-beaten-looking man, with a scar on his left cheek-

bone, which he had received while following his vocation in the trenches before Badajos.

“Friend of that young puppy’s, eh!” said Uncle Crabb, eyeing Newton all over. “Ah!” staring at him over his spectacles. “I see. Order, cockney; genus, gent. How d’ye do, sir? Pleased to know you. At least, when I say pleased, don’t take that as a compliment which is only an unmeaning form of speech. Come down to show us how to dance, and shoot, and so forth, I suppose? I’ve seen many of your sort laughed at for their pains.”

This was pretty well for a first introduction. Newton thought so too.

“I hope your criticism may prove incorrect,” he said. “I don’t pretend to much skill as a shot; and it is not my fault, you know, if I am a Cockney; I didn’t choose my birthplace. But even had I done so, I don’t know that I should have altered it. The gent, however, I repudiate.”

“What d’ye wear such a coat as that for

then?" asked the old gentleman, pointing to Newton's worked silk facings.

"Hem!" coughed Newton, a little nettled, and colouring slightly. "What do *you* wear such a coat as that for?" pointing to Uncle Crabb's square-cut skirt, and turning the tables.

"Confound your impudence!" said Uncle Crabb, evidently more pleased than offended. "To be sure, mine is a little square-cut, but I don't like to give up an old fashion."

"Then why do you want me to give up a new one?" retorted Newton.

"Hem, ehem! Here, Charley!" and Uncle Crabb caught a young lady who was passing by the wrist, and drew her towards him. "Let me introduce Mr. Dogvane to you. My eldest niece, Mr. Dogvane, Miss Bowers. Young Cockney, chock full of conceit, my dear; go and take some of it out of him. Don't get spooney on her, Dogberry; she'll

only laugh at you, and she's as bad tampering with as a hand-grenade."

"Let those laugh who win," thought Newton, as, with this strange introduction, he took Miss Bowers's arm within his, and walked down the room. She was a splendid girl, that Charlotte Bowers, with those magnificent eyes of hers, her fine bust, long thick glossy hair dressed coronet-wise. That fashion, by-the-bye, does not suit every woman, though they all think it does. Ay, she looked and walked every inch a queen. And what a melting liquid voice she had; what a clear musical laugh; what pungent wit. How she could pick either friend or foe to pieces, until it would have been impossible for all the king's horses and all the king's men to have set them together again to your satisfaction. Newton was dazzled and astonished. A quadrille was forming, and he got into it somehow; he felt nervous and agitated, and, what was worse, he showed it. The belle of

the room—and such a belle, too! What should he begin to talk about? for Miss Bowers did not look entirely pleased.

“Very warm,” said Newton, as a matter of course. Now it was not very warm; so his partner looked at him with some little surprise, and then said:—

“Indeed, I don’t find it so.”

“Ah, ah, I meant very cold,” said Newton, confused.

“Indeed, I don’t feel that either.”

Newton was shut up; he retired within himself, like a telescope, or an alarmed snail.

“Uncommonly decided sort of young lady,” thought Newton, as he strove hard to hit upon the right topic.

“Fond of dancing, Miss Bowers?” asked Newton, making a mistake in the figure at the same time.

“Yes,” answered Miss Bowers, “when I’ve a good partner.”

This was so atrociously rude, that Newton was rolled over like a rabbit whittled with small shot.

Miss Bowers felt that she owed an *amende*; so she asked Newton “if he was fond of the country, and whether he did not find it a great change?” This induced a little conversation on the relative merits of town and country, during which a remarkably handsome, well-dressed man, with a heavy moustache and soldierly air, who had been talking for a minute or two to Mrs. Bowers, made his way to Charlotte’s side.

“Miss Bowers, may I hope for the pleasure of the next waltz?”

Miss Charlotte’s eyes glistened, and her colour deepened a trifle; but she answered with strange perversity:—

“Thank you, Captain Stevens, I am engaged to Mr. Dogvane. Captain Stevens, Mr. Dogvane—a friend of my brother’s.”

Captain Stevens became aware of Mr.

Dogvane's presence, and Mr. Dogvane was distantly conscious of Captain Stevens's. They smiled an alligator-like smile. The Captain could have devoured Newton, and Newton could have kicked the Captain with all the pleasure in life, as Charlotte's fine eye rested on him with an expression of kindness for a moment. Poor Newton! he little knew to what he owed that glance. The fact is, the Captain was late, and Miss Bowers tiffed.

A waltz struck up. We have said that Newton was doubtful about his waltzing, and, had he had time to think over it, he would have tried to back out of the honour so unexpectedly bestowed on him. But Charlotte's hand was on his shoulder, and off they went. The first two or three turns Newton succeeded in beyond his expectation, for Charlotte was an unexceptionable waltzer; but a reckless attempt at the "renverse" completely upset him. He couldn't get round; he knew he couldn't when he attempted it. Why did

he? He felt he was going. There—he missed step, trod on his partner's toe, kicked her shin, and finally was hurled, in his confusion, out of the circle, by the dashing, rushing, meteor-like Captain, who had obtained another partner, and was darting hither, thither, here, there, everywhere, with perfect precision.

“I think we had better sit down, sir,” said Charlotte, in utter disgust at having been beaten at her own game.

“Indeed,” said Newton, “I think so too; I am extremely sorry that I attempted to waltz, not being very good at it.”

“Pray, don't mention it, sir, it is not of the least consequence,” answered the beautiful girl. “My sister, Cecilia—excuse me one moment—Sissy, dear, will you take my place one moment?”—and Charlotte, with a slight bend, glided away. Miss Sissy took her seat with all the coolness in life, and commenced a conversation with Newton as easily as if she

had known him for months. There was no *mauvaise honte* about Sissy.

“ Oh Mithter Dogvane ! the minueth fieth’d for the first dance after supper. You’ll have to do it, tho’ you’d better make up your mind to it. There’th Tom Tharp, with her Ladyship and the Baroneth, hith thithterth.” But, as it is easier to talk in a lisp than to write, or rather read in one, our readers will bear in mind that Sissy does lisp, which will be sufficient for our purpose. “ We call them,” she continued, “ her Ladyship and the Baroness, because they are so awfully grand. Now, directly anyone is introduced to him, or he meets an acquaintance, he begins to run down all the other girls in the room—says they look ill, and what a pity they sit up so late reading novels, or some such stuff. Very ill-natured, isn’t it? Stay now—see how I’ll serve him out; I’ll shut him up. Here, Ted!” to her brother, who was passing with a lady on his arm—a fair, retiring-

looking girl, with chestnut hair, and very blue eyes, who had been standing near Newton and Charlotte during the quadrille. "Here, Bessie!" said the young mischief-maker; "Come here—such fun; I'm going to shut up Tom Sharp,—only I want a witness or two."

The couple turned towards them.

"Mr. Dogvane, my sister Bessie," said Ned.

A quiet, lady-like bow was the response. What very blue eyes! How clear and honest they were! Newton thought Bessie not only pretty, but—well, never mind what he thought. They were a good deal together during the evening.

"Well, what is it, Sissy?"

"There's Tom Sharp, Ned."

"I see him."

"He's coming towards us, and he'll say 'how ill Charlotte and Bessie are looking.'"

"Very likely; it won't be the first time by a score."

“No. Then he’ll say how well his sisters look, what a get up theirs is, and all that. Now I’ll have a bit of fun. You and Mr. Dogvane, sit here. Come along, Bessie;” and drawing her sister off, away slipped Sissy, just as the gentleman in question came up. He was a vulgar, insignificant-looking little man, troubled with a watch-chain and a shirt-collar, of Chartist principles, with red hair, (it was always apparently standing up for its rights).

“How de do, Bowers? How de do? By the way, (sinking his voice), how very ill Charlotte and Bessie are looking! *Is* there anything the matter? Charlotte is so *very* pale; and, *dear* Bessie—do you know, if I were you, I should insist upon her taking cod-liver oil? Finest thing in the world for—”

“Dear me! I hadn’t noticed.”

“Oh! everybody is remarking it, everybody. It makes me quite melancholy.” Ned

here, as was expected, introduced his friend. "How well the girls look to-night, don't they?" putting his head a little on one side, and looking like an elderly jackdaw at two tolerable looking girls of affected manners, who sat on an ottoman hard by. "How well they do get up! I've seen a few girls in their war-paint in my time, sir; but the way those girls do do it, when they mean doing it, is, you know, astonishing."

All this was said with an occasional glance at Newton. He was angling for the new man. A new man was a consideration to the Sharps, as Sissy would say, "they could not afford to lose an opportunity."

Sissy and Bessie here approached.

"Oh, Mr. Sharp! I'm so glad to see you; I've been longing to ask you what is the matter with Gerty and Louise? They do look so ill, I declare I'm quite alarmed. Can I get them anything? Don't you think a bath, some hot water, or something? Gerty turned

quite green just now as I was standing by her, and you know that's just as they say she did before she had the shingles last year? Can I do anything? Do advise them to let Dr. Sardine see them."

"Eh! what! 'pon my word, I really don't see. I was just saying that—eh! I don't observe." He looked at Sissy, but Sissy was as grave as a judge. Bessie was looking with great earnestness at a picture, but there was just the faintest twitching about the corner of Ned's mouth; and Mr. Sharp, muttering something about "engaged, polka, partner," made his escape, feeling, as the least possible indication of a titter reached him, that he had decidedly missed "the new man."

Captain Stevens and Miss Charlotte had evidently, at length, arranged matters more satisfactorily. Captain Stevens's regiment was in Canterbury. He was evidently something more than the mere friend of the house; and he was a real captain,

a handsome captain — a man of good fortune. He was, one of the most accomplished men in London. He could ride, fence, shoot, dress, dance, sing, and talk better than Newton had ever seen any private individual do either. He was, in ladies' society, a Paris, an Apollo; in men's, an uncommonly good fellow—a Crichton at all games, and a graceful, all-accomplished athlete. Had Newton thought of entering the lists against the Captain, it would have been utterly hopeless; but Bessie's quiet manner and lively, well-informed conversation were rapidly effacing any impression her more showy sister's charms had made on Newton.

The party went on as most parties do. Charlotte, after a time, was induced to sing "just one song," which she did. Sissy, having ascertained by glancing at a portfolio left by Mr. Sharp in the hall what the Baroness's last new song was, had communicated the interesting intelligence to her

highly-accomplished sister, who, as a matter of course, happened to have it. What was there new or pretty in that way which the Captain did not take care to bring her? Of course she happened to choose that very identical song, and sang it with a taste and style which left no room for rivalry, but snuffed out the Baroness completely; "Though really," as Sissy said, "the poor old Baroness had a very nice voice indeed, and sang charmingly *when you could hear her*. But the great thing of the evening was the minuet. They were determined to have it; so as soon as the first waltz after supper was completed, the old lady and Newton had no rest until they stood up to perform. Newton was, of course, in some little trepidation, as when he had danced it before he did so to a roomful of friends, with all of whom he was on the most intimate terms. Moreover, his partner and himself had rehearsed it at least twenty times. Now, almost every face was strange to him,

and the applause which greeted them helped to render him a little confused. After the first step or two, however, he recovered his equanimity, and, as Ned said, "went to work at pointing his toe and squaring his elbows like one o'clock." But to mark the air of antique grace, the serious courtesy, of the dear old lady herself, and the way that they bowed, glissaded, advanced and retreated, was a marvel to remark. It was a great thing; and Newton gained immense *κῶδος* with the young ladies, who looked upon him as a master of deportment and grace, and a most self-sacrificing and obliging young fellow. Mr. Bowers thanked him warmly. As for Mrs. Bowers, to say that she was delighted when she said, "she liked a little bit of fun like that dearly," would not have been saying half enough. Even Uncle Crabb smiled grimly; and Ned, slapping him on the back, said, "he was a deuced good old cock." But the praise which he prized most was Bessie's,

who said, as she thanked him, “that she had not seen mamma so cheerful for months ; and she really believed that Mr. Dogvane had put half a year’s life into her, and done her more good than all the doctors.”

CHAPTER IX.

A DAY WITH THE LONG TAILS.

BREAKFAST. It was a rule at Mr. Bowers' that, barring illness, every member of his family should appear at breakfast in proper morning costume; and a very excellent rule it is. There was no down-at-heel, slip-shod, unkempt, onestringed untidiness at Mr. Bowers' breakfast-table. His family might sit up as late as they liked, and they might go to bed again after breakfast, if they chose, but at breakfast, he would have them neat, clean, and wholesome. If a woman looks lovely by waxlight in gorgeous evening costume, how much more lovely and lovable is she in her

neat morning dress—clear as driven snow—as she sits at the breakfast-table before the hissing urn. Trust me, a woman can, if she chooses, be more dangerous to a man's peace of mind in the morning than in the evening, if she only knows it. The papers made their appearance, letters were read and answered, and the gentlemen separated to prepare for shooting. Newton went up stairs, put on his plaids, and, having sufficiently admired himself in them, descended and passed the breakfast-room window on his way to the stables in search of Mungo. Uncle Crabb was standing at the window; Newton's radiant plaid caught his eye.

“Ay, ay!—why, what's this?” he exclaimed. “A rainbow, by Jove!”

“A rainbow!” said the young ladies, incredulously.

“A rainbow!” repeated Captain Stevens, Mr. Bowers, and Ned, all at once, and each

hurrying to the window to view the phenomenon.

“It’s either a rainbow or a very brilliant species of horticultural curiosity,” said Uncle Crabb. “Surely the gardener hasn’t been striking out something new in holly-hocks.”

“Horticultural, decidedly,” said Captain Stevens, looking over his shoulders. “Why really, Ned, I do think it’s your friend Dogberry.”

“Dogvane,” said Ned, markedly, feeling a little nettled, but laughing in spite of himself.

“Dogvane, certainly—ah! Couldn’t you prevail on the gardener, Miss Charlotte, to cover him up with a bell-glass? Decided ornament to the middle bed there.”

“For shame, Capt. Stevens! you really are too bad; and you ought to know better than to do so, Uncle Crabb. Edward, why do you let them make fun of your friend?” said Bessie, trying hard herself to repress a laugh. While Newton, unconscious of the amusement

he was creating, moved off in search of Mungo.

The party assembled—black, grey, and sober green. Newton felt himself conspicuous, and not altogether at his ease.

“Very pretty plaid that, Mr. Dogvane—What do you call it?”

“I believe it is called the Macdoodle tartan,” said Newton, shortly.

“Very likely. Let me advise you, if you go anywhere near Holm Close, or the Ponds, ‘to beware of the bull,’” said Uncle Crabb, as he ascended to his seat in Capt. Stevens’s cart. Newton said nothing, but blushed deeply; and, as the young ladies were looking at them from the window, he got out of sight as much as possible behind the dog-cart, which was waiting for Ned and himself, and pretended to be very busy over Mungo, who was once more committed to the interior of the cart, but this time in company with a setter of Ned’s, instead of a turkey. Possibly the ar-

rangement was not quite so much to his taste; for a series of short fights commenced, interspersed with snappings and growls. William jumped up behind, and, administering a few vigorous kicks and pokes from time to time to the belligerents, kept them a little in order. Uncle Crabb and the Captain were already well ahead of them, and the delicate scent of their cigars hung on the sharp morning air. How enjoyable is the short drive which takes you to your sport on a fine November morning, with a good day's shooting *in prospectu*, in company with a pleasant party, over covers you have never shot before! Ned was in high spirits, but somehow Newton was fidgetty. He knew that something was expected of him, and he also knew that it was not in him. He did not know what he was to do with Mungo. He knew that "To-ho!" was a proper thing to say to him upon some particular occasion; but what that occasion was he did not know. Then the plaid, which that mendacious clothier

had informed him "was all the thing," he had found out to be "not the thing at all," but a subject of marked surprise to his sporting friends. He lighted a cigar; let it out; lighted it again; threw it away; kicked Mungo, who was biting his trowsers, and who instantly commenced worrying them in good earnest, and would have treated himself to a mouthful of the Macdoodle, had not Ned's setter taken the opportunity to create a diversion by biting Mungo's leg, who forthwith renewed the combat with his fellow-traveller; and another fit of towzling, biting, and growling took place, in the midst of which they turned in at a lodge gate, and, after some half a mile's drive through a perfect shubbery of rhododendrons, they drew up before a handsome country-seat. Dealmount was situated on a slight eminence. In front of it, a sparkling river ran between smooth green banks, where, on fine summer evenings, Ned occasionally persuaded a two or three pound trout or so

to test the virtues of the white-coated "coachman," or an enlarged edition of the "alder." Behind the house, and stretching far away in the distance, were the well-wooded covers of Dealmount. The grounds appeared to be well laid out and looked after. Keepers and grooms were leading away the newly-arrived conveyances, coupling dogs, putting together guns, and filling shot-pouches, &c. A stout, jolly-looking gentleman was shaking hands with Captain Stevens and Uncle Crabb; five or six other gentlemen, equipped for shooting, were lounging in and out of two open windows, smoking or doing cherry brandy, ale, or other drinkables, which were dispensed to them by a plethoric butler, Mr. Bateman, and a neat-handed Phillis, Sarah, Mary, Jane, Susan, or Eliza, as the case might be, or the gentleman's taste dictate. From one to the other she tripped, with a ready smile for each pretty thing that was said to her by the guests — despite the frowns of

Mr. Bateman, who was very weak in that quarter.

Sir John Vasey was a bachelor Baronet—liberal, hearty, and free—a perfect specimen of a country gentleman. I don't mean of a bumpkin, for he had taken honours, was a very well-informed man, and a perfect prince of good fellows—a kind landlord, a thorough farmer, an excellent neighbour, and a first-rate sportsman. He had chosen his *rôle*, and had never felt any inclination to alter it. In the seasons, he hunted, shot, or fished, three days in the week; the other three he devoted to his estate, his poorer neighbours, and his magisterial duties. He refused the mastership of the hounds, though he contributed largely to their support. He had again and again refused the *honour*, if honour it be, of sitting in Parliament—not that he shirked the duties, or felt unequal to the position—very far from it, but he refused upon the plea that there wererogues and fools enough near home without

his going all the way to Westminster to find them. It will be judged from this that Sir John troubled not his mind with politics. This would be hardly correct. In all foreign matters he appeared to take much interest, but he seemed to have made up his mind as regarded home politics, and to have given them up as a bad job. Consequently, he had neither voted, nor in any way interfered in an election for years. Our friends got down, and after shaking hands with the jolly-looking-gentleman at the door, Ned introduced his friend, Mr. Dogvane—a gentleman from London, desirous of signalling himself in Sir John's covers—to Sir John Vasey. Sir John looked at Newton with rather a quizzical expression of countenance, but shook hands with him, and welcomed him warmly.

Newton began to look about him; he became conscious that he formed a point of attraction, or rather observation, to the gentlemen at the window. More blacks, greys,

and greens—not a single plaid beyond the simplest shepherd plaid among them; and he felt more strongly than ever that plaids were anything but “the thing,” as he overheard Mr. Buncomb, the head keeper, remark to Mr. Bateman, the butler, “It was the first time he ever see a snuff-shop out a-shootin’.” To which Mr. Bateman responded that, “He ’oped no one would mistake it for a cock-pheasant, which wasn’t unlikely.”

They entered the room, where were fragments of an extensive breakfast, to which one or two gentlemen were still devoting themselves. But, as they had already breakfasted, Newton took nothing but one small glass of cherry-brandy.

“Now, gentlemen,” said Sir John, “if you are ready, we will make a start;” and, after holding a short conference with Mr. Buncomb, he said, “Mr. Wilson and Mr. Chamney had better take the lower side of Coverly Dean—will you shoot with Captain Stevens, Charles?”

I think you had better." Uncle Crabb nodded, and carefully adjusted his specs. "Then you had better take the upper side. Neddy, my boy, where will you shoot?"

"I think," answered Ned, with a glance at Newton, who was handling the Lancaster in rather a doubtful manner, "Mr. Dogvane and myself had better take *the outside*."

"Thank you," said Sir John, with a curious glance in the same direction; "thank you—so you had."

Mr. Buncomb gave a great sigh, as if a heavy weight was taken off his mind by this arrangement.

"Mr. Buncomb," said Sir John, turning sharply on that dignitary; "have the goodness not to repeat that remarkably impertinent and offensive noise." Mr. Buncomb looked foolish, and, to speak figuratively, put his tail between his legs, and marched to the rear—to the huge, but secret, delight of some of his under-satellites, one of whom grinned,

and whispered to another that "Buncomb was winged."

Sir John then gave directions to the other division of the party, and off they started, Buncomb leading Mungo and the setter in a string, while a well-trained retriever followed at his heels. Sir John walked with our two friends — possibly he foresaw some fun in Newton.

"Don't you shoot, Sir John?" asked Ned, seeing that the Baronet carried no gun.

"Not to-day, Ned; plenty without me," said the good-natured host. "Besides," he continued, "I sprained my wrist slightly yesterday."

They crossed a stile. The parties separated, each couple of gentlemen taking an under-keeper with them.

Before our party lay a strip of turnips.

"Birds here," said Mr. Buncomb, loosening the setter's collar, and then pulling Mungo (who had been straining at the string till his

eyes were almost starting from his head) over on his back, and giving him a smart whack with an ash-stick by way of remonstrance. Mungo got up, sulkily enough, and shook himself, but he regarded Mr. Buncomb henceforth with an evil eye;—however, he bided his time.

It was a beautiful morning for shooting. The slight hoar-frost had yielded to the sun, and the turnips were a trifle damp. Indeed, before we go any further, we may mention that the trifle increased as they walked on, and Newton's plaid, not being of fast colours, soon presented a singular appearance from the knees downwards.

They drew the strip of turnips blank.

“Too wet—not off the stubble yet,” murmured Buncomb.

“I think Buncomb's right,” said Sir John. “The birds are still on the stubble. No, there they are”—the setter had stopped at the hedge.

“In the stubble, for all that,” said Buncomb,—“t’other side o’ the hedge.”

At this moment there was a loud report of a gun some two fields off.

“Ha!” said Sir John, “there goes the Captain, opening the ball with his 24-pounder.”

“Then somethin’s gone’d to grass, or I ain’t no profit” (Buncomb for prophet), said Mr. Buncomb. “The Captn do shoot owda-cious well with that large bore of hisn.”

“Now Mr. Dogvane, look alive—forward,” said Sir John. “There are the birds. Follow Ned through the gap.”

It was all very well for Sir John to say, “Look alive.” As it was, Newton only looked nervous. “There are the birds, eh?” thought Newton, who expected to see something similar to a flock of geese on a moor. “I wonder where they are; and how they know that they’re there. I’m sure I can’t see them.” He had been walking some twenty

yards apart, and had not noticed the dog; and, as he passed to the gap, he now for the first time saw the setter standing at the hedge like a statue, some forty yards down. He had never seen a dog make a point before. "Dear me!" he said, "how he stares! Look at that dog. There's surely something the matter with him. He's in a fit. He must be. That's it. Ned, Ned," he called to his friend, who had just struggled through the hedge, "Ned, here's your dog in a fit. Hadn't Mr. Buncomb better run home for a handful of salt. They say it's a good thing for a dog in a fit."

Newton had heard so, at any rate, and resolved to show off his knowledge.

There was a slight whirr, a "confound it!" from Ned, and a roar of laughter from Sir John and Buncomb, in which, after a moment of vexation, Ned joined heartily, as the birds got off untouched.

"Ha, ha, ha! a fit!" said Sir John.

“Ho, ho, ho! a fit!” said Ned; “capital; yes, a fit! oh! to be sure!”

“Well,” said Mr. Buncomb, repressing his mirth, “if that aint the best I ever did hear! Oh Lor’!”

“Well, but,” said Newton, looking in astonishment from one to the other, “wasn’t he in a fit? I never saw a dog look so strangely in my life.”

As if to disclaim any trace of indisposition, the setter, after snuffing at the hedge once more, came trotting up to them as orderly as possible, to Newton’s surprise.

“Got over the attack safely and pro-videntially,” said Mr. Buncomb.

“Well; but wasn’t he, you know?” repeated Newton, turning from one to the other.

Sir John was trying to recover his gravity; Ned was still laughing; and Mr. Buncomb answered:—

“Well, ye see, sir, when they has them

sort of fits, which I 'opes you'll see the dogs often troubled with to-day, it's as well not to holler too loud, 'cause the birds don't like the sound of the voice no how; and unless we fetches some o' that salt you spoke on, and can get to drop it on their tails, I'm very much afeared we sha'n't *catch* many on 'em."

"Never mind, my dear sir; it's of no consequence. Pray excuse my rudeness. Buncomb, hold your tongue," said Sir John. "But, really, the notion was so very original that—ha, ha! yes, a fit! I beg your pardon." And Sir John speedily enlightened Newton on "the point."

"Bless my soul! what a fool I am," thought Newton, "and what an ass and a muff they must think me. I wish I'd stayed at home."

They had not proceeded far, when the setter, who was ranging over a little bit of rough stuff, dropped suddenly.

“Nuther fit, sir,” whispered Buncomb, to Newton. “Look out.”

“Come on, New,” said Ned; “it’s of no use trying to get round them. They won’t break easily, and we shall only be wasting time.” And Ned walked straight to the dog.

A loud whirr; bang, bang, went Ned’s two barrels; and Newton saw an indistinct vision, through the smoke, of certain small brown objects skimming away over the next hedge, before he could well recover his surprise and excitement.

“Did you hit any of them?” asked Newton.

The retriever came walking up, bearing a partridge in his mouth.

“Why didn’t you fire?” asked Ned, as he was re-loading.

“Me? Oh! I didn’t see them soon enough,” answered Newton, blushing.

“Didn’t see them soon enough! Why, it

wasn't above a twenty yards rise. How much sooner *do* you expect to see them in November?"

"Well, I don't know, but they flew up so very suddenly, and flew away so very swiftly, and there was such a whirring, that I—"

"Ah! that's a way they've got."

"And a werry puzzlin' way, too, to young 'ands, added Mr. Buncomb.

"I believe you," quoth Newton.

"Bad shot, Neddy," said the Baronet; "you didn't kill either of the birds clean; the one you've got was a runner, and the other one is dead in the hedge."

"Never can shoot with this gun," answered Ned.

"Then what do you shoot with it for?—pshaw! The gun is good enough—you shot behind them both, and if you were shooting at Bue Rocks in a wind, you wouldn't kill two in a dozen. Take Nep, Buncomb, and retrieve that bird. It's about thirty yards to

the right of that holly-bush." And away went Buncomb with Nep, and in a few minutes returned with the bird.

Meanwhile they had reached the cover side, and shot after shot was heard within. The boughs crashed as the beaters pushed through. "Look out above—hare gone up—hi there below!—mark!—mar-r-r-k!" Whirr, crash, rattle, bang! Hares, rabbits, pheasants, scurried away in all directions, but mostly forwards.

A cock pheasant comes sailing out, and falls a lifeless lump to Ned's fire—another rushes up into the air, out of the ditch at Newton's side, the sun shining and glittering on his plumage. The noise it makes quite scares Newton for a moment, who doesn't recover himself till the pheasant is well out of shot, when he fires both barrels, the second at about 150 yards. It is needless to say it was untouched.

"That's a werry good rule o' yourn, sir,"

said Buncomb, who had watched the performance with interest, "not to fire at 'em too close, 'cos, you sees, if you fires at 'em too close, you blows 'em all to pieces." Newton only wished he *could* have the luck to blow one all to pieces, he'd be quite content to pick him up by instalments.

"You let him get a leetle too far, New," said his friend, with a smile. "Hit or miss, blaze at them a little quicker."

And now the fun within grew fast and furious. Scarcely a minute elapsed without the roar of two or three barrels, when "Mark cock"—glorious sound—"mark!—mar-r-k *cock!*" and three barrels, one after another, followed the announcement.

"Mark cock! mar-r-k!"

"Close at hand, by Jove! look out," and the bird came shooting through the tree-tops, as fair a shot as man could wish for. Bang—bang—went both Ned's barrels at him,

without apparently rumpling a feather as the bird sped on.

“Too quick!” said Sir John.

Newton, of course, had never seen a woodcock on the wing, and was watching the flight of the bird without the most distant intention of firing at it. It seemed an absurdity, an impertinence, for him to fire.

“Blaze at him, New! What are you about?” sung out Ned, directly he saw he had missed the bird, which was now a good fifty yards off. Newton hastily raised his gun and fired; his eye was still on the bird. So quickly did he pull, indeed, that the gun was hardly home to his shoulder, and the consequence was a severe kick, by way of a reminder from the Lancaster to hold it tighter another time. Newton dropped the butt of the gun on the ground, and rubbed his shoulder after accomplishing this feat, forgetting all about the cock in the momentary pain; but a “Well done, by Jove!” from Sir

John, and “Wiped all their noses, by Jingo!” from Mr. Buncomb, apprised him that something extraordinary had occurred. And, indeed, something very extraordinary had occurred; for the Lancaster, apparently disgusted at the want of skill on the part of its present master, seemed as if it had taken the matter into its own hands, and thought proper to send an ounce and a half of 5’s exactly in the right direction, for down came the cock as dead as a stone. How it was done, of course Newton couldn’t make out. He couldn’t take much credit to himself for it, so he rubbed his shoulder and said nothing; though Sir John slapped him on the back heartily, and pronounced it “A doosed good shot, sir;” for the possibility of demolishing a cock by accident never crossed his brain.

Ned looked a little foolish, and Buncomb’s organ of respect—veneration, I believe, the phrenologists call it—became much more fully developed towards Newton. Two or three brace

of pheasants, a hare or two, with half a-dozen rabbits, were disposed of, Newton firing with the greatest regularity, without adding anything but noise to the sport.

“Come along, lads,” said Sir John. “They’re almost through the cover, and there’s a large patch of beans at the end, which I left standing for the sake of the sport. It was a thin crop, and hardly worth cutting, and I expect it will be as full of game as an egg is of meat. It’s the cream of the day. Buncomb, take in the dogs; we must beat it carefully and silently. We’ll form a line about twenty yards apart, and walk it down. The six guns will about do it, Buncomb, eh?”

“Jist the thing, Se John,” answered Buncomb, as he tied up the dogs.

They got over the hedge, and found three of the other four gentlemen just coming out from the cover. The proposed line was formed, and they were waiting for Uncle Crabb, who was retrieving a wounded hare—

and they were upon the point of entering the beans—when a hare, which lay hidden in the grass, jumped up under the dog Mungo's nose, and went scampering off through an angle of the beans for the cover. Mungo, of course, made a dash at it, and of course was pulled over with an "Ah, would yer!" by Buncomb, and received another smart whack or two from the "bit of ash." This proceeding was not in accordance with Mungo's ideas of propriety; but he took his thrashing without a growl or a yelp. The first step was taken into the beans, when a loud yell burst from the lips of Mr. Buncomb. "Oh, Lord! oh, my!" screamed that functionary. They looked round—Mungo had got him by the calf of the leg. He had fallen behind the unsuspecting Buncomb, and when well behind he chose his place, and deliberately, and with malice prepense, fixed Mr. Buncomb.

"Leave go, yer cussed warment," roared Buncomb. "Oh, wont I jist pay yer for this

'ere!" and Mr. Buncomb, dropping the string, seized the ash in both hands, preparatory to doing his best towards the splitting of Mungo's skull. But no sooner did he drop the string and raise the stick, than Mungo released his hold, and vanished into the beans after the hare.

"Confound that dog! he'll play the deuce with the shooting;" said Sir John. "Hi—here! after him, Buncomb; bring him back."

"Ord dang un!" said Buncomb, as he caressed his wounded limb. "I doan't want no more to do wi' he."

Uncle Crabb was standing on the bank; he had but just made his way through the cover, and was to take the nearest place along the cover side. He had not seen the above little episode; but he now saw Mungo tearing through the beans towards the gap he was standing in.

"Whose brute's that? d——n the dog!

he'll play Old Scratch in the beans. Go back, ye brute. Hoy, Mr.—Mr.—Mr. Rainbow, here's this beast of a dog of yours; call him back."

"Mungo!" shouted Newton; "Mungo! Ah! ah! come here." But Mungo merely flourished his tail, and travelled the faster.

"Here, old dog! Poor fellow! Here, then! Here, poor old doggy!" said Uncle Crabb, in the most winning tone. But Mungo had "eaten stick," as the Turks say, and wasn't going to be coaxed and "poor-fellowed" out of his liberty again in a hurry; so he stopped and looked at Uncle Crabb out of the corner of that evil eye of his, and, as Uncle Crabb advanced, holding towards him a hare he had shot, and using the most enticing endearments, Mungo hesitated. The hare *looked* tempting; but he could not quite make up his mind. So, as Uncle Crabb advanced, he backed a little, distrustful of the tempter's ulterior intentions. "I wish to goodness I

could get hold of that string!" thought Uncle Crabb. "I wish I could get hold of that hare without that suspicious-looking chap's getting any nearer to me!" thought, or rather looked, Mungo, still backing astern. It was evident that Mungo wouldn't bite—he was a shy fish; he wasn't going to be caught. So Uncle Crabb lost all patience, and hurled the hare at Mungo's head with a strong anathema. Straight to its mark went the hare, and with such force and correctness of aim that, catching Mungo on the side of the jowl, it knocked him head over heels. With a slight yelp Mungo picked himself up, and started off at score right up the very centre of the beans, flushing the pheasants by dozens, while all sorts of game went whirring and scurrying away in every direction. A pleasing chorus of shouts, mingled with sundry oaths, were sent after him, above which Newton's frantic "*Mungo! Mungo!* Ah, you brute! Ah, you beast!" could be plainly distinguished. How savage

they were, and how dreadfully annoyed and upset Newton was.

“If you’d only have shot the beast, Mr. Crabb, I wouldn’t have minded a bit.”

“I she’d think not!” said Mr. Buncomb, holding his leg, and winding a handkerchief round it; “*I* she’d think not. You’d a howed Muster Cha’s a debt o’ hinferral (qy. eternal) gratitood, and so she’d I. I’m sure *I* she’d a considered as I was dreadful hobligated to hany gentleman as had ridded me of anythink—half so—half so—d—nable!” continued Mr. Buncomb, winding up his oration under the influence of excitement.

“There’s another, and another, and a brace more! There goes a leash—two cocks and a hen! My eye! what a pity!” said one of the under-keepers.

“Mungo-o-o-o,” roared Newton, almost tearing his hair.

“Mungo-o,” roared the keepers.

“Mung-o-o-o-o,” shouted the shooters; and

the whole field shouted "Mungo," till it was black in the face, without producing the least effect upon that contumacious animal.

It was rare fun to Mungo, this "beating the beans;" and he rushed up and down—backwards and forwards—crashing away, until there was hardly a head of game left in the beans. As to standing at anything! He had about as much idea of it as an Australian dingo. The only notion he at all entertained of game was, that it was something or other constructed for the amusement of dogs; that it ran away when pursued, and, if caught, would doubtless prove good eating. But Mungo had done his worst, and, indeed, his last piece of mischief; and Buncomb was avenged. Having finished the beans off to his entire approbation, he charged the hedge which separated them from the cover. The string by which Mr. Buncomb had held him was still flying loosely about in the air; it lapped round a branch, and, instead of alight-

ing on his legs, he hung by his neck and broke it.

“*Sic transit gloria* Mungi, and a good job, too,” as Uncle Crabb remarked, when his lifeless corpse was found hanging in the hedge.

“Would you like to have him stuffed and put in a glass-case, Mr. Rainbow?”

The cream of the day was skimmed. They lunched, and, under the influence of the hearty good ale and a soothing weed, they finally forgave Newton, as he seemed so very sorry while they chaffed him. They condoled with him upon the loss of the truly invaluable Mungo; and although Newton's brow lowered at his name, it was not for the loss of Mungo. No. He didn't care twopence about that; he hated the very remains of Mungo with a fervent hatred, and only wished he had hung himself half an hour sooner. He grieved not at his demise; but, like “Tubal Cain,”

He was filled with pain
For the mischief he had done.

And he took their chaff so well, so good-humouredly, and seemed so concerned at the spoiling of their sport, that even Uncle Crabb said :—

“Never mind, Rainbow ; it doesn’t signify. Take another glass of ale, and wash down your disgust. By the way,” he continued, “what became of that cock ? Did you destroy him, you Ned ?”

“No, sir,” answered Ned.

“Let him get away, eh ? Bah ! I always thought you a muff.”

“Never mind,” answered Ned ; “somebody else missed him as well as I.”

“Oh ! I only viewed him through the tree-tops—quite seventy yards off.” *

“I suppose you had a fair shot ?”

* It’s a very strange thing ; but the author has always remarked that a cock is *invariably* seventy yards off when he is missed, and very often when he’s killed. It’s a sort of distance they choose for the purpose of being shot at, he supposes, as he can’t account for it in any other way.

Ned nodded.

“ Deuced provoking,” continued Uncle Crabb, “ for the first cock of the season to get away from six guns.”

“ Oh ! but he didn’t get away ; we bagged him.”

“ Why, who stopped him then ?”

Sir John pointed with his thumb to Newton, who was sitting next to him. Uncle Crabb’s eyes dilated.

“ Never ! You don’t mean that !” and he rose from his elbow, on which he was leaning, to the full length of his arm, with astonishment.

“ I do, though. As clean and as quick a shot as ever you saw in your life.”

“ Well, I am—capital. I thought he was coming a bit of the old soldier over us ; and if it hadn’t been for the unaccountable possession of that most impracticable and incomprehensible cur, which has just committed suicide, one could understand it. So you shot

the cock, Mr.—Mr.—Rainbow?” turning to Newton. “Here’s your health, and may you live to shoot hundreds.”

Newton’s success went a long way towards obliterating Mungo’s failure, for the present, at any rate, and compliments were bestowed on him. It was of no use for him to say it was chance. Who ever shot a woodcock by chance? Nonsense; they wouldn’t have it.

Lunch was finished, and shooting recommenced; but the ale had somehow disturbed the accuracy of their aim, and there was a good deal of shooting for a small result.

“Never knowed much good done arter lunch and strong ale,” said Buncomb.

Nevertheless Newton managed to accomplish the wish he had formed in the morning; for, a pheasant getting up close to him, he let drive at it at about ten yards distance, and literally blew it all to pieces—a proceeding which did not elicit from Mr. Buncomb, who

lingered behind, the applause it deserved, and Newton expected. But Mr. Buncomb discovered a hare in a hedge, in a spot where hares always *are* found—the middle of a good sized holly-bush, some three feet from the ground. Newton pulled at the unconscious innocent, “sitting,” as he called it, and knocked her over; and, on rushing to pick it up, found it to be the skin of a newly-slain Sarah, neatly distended with dry grass—a time-honoured old practical joke, which, of course, caused the usual amount of laughter. And perhaps there wasn’t a little more chaff at Newton’s expense about “shooting hares in a tree,” &c. Nothing further of consequence occurred; and they reached Dealmount without any mishap. The bag consisted of 27 brace of pheasants, 32 hares, 23 couples of rabbits, 3 brace of birds, a wood-pigeon and the cock. The other party, which consisted only of four guns, beat them by about twenty head, thanks to Mungo.

A sporting dinner followed, during which the various incidents of the day were discussed with humour and gusto. Much good wine was disposed of. Mr. Bateman was in his glory; his calves shone, his cheeks and chin quivered, and his nose blazed like a beacon as he placed the dry port or superb Madeira—a wine, alas! fast disappearing—lovingly before them.

Mr. Buncomb received a salve for his sores in the shape of a piece of gold, which raised Mr. Buncomb's opinion of Newton very much indeed.

“For,” he said, “if the gen’leman worn’t no sportsman, he were a gen’leman;” and he whispered to Newton, “that tho’ he couldn’t give him a day in the covers like, altogether himself, yet if he were going to make a stay, and liked to walk round with him as he went his rounds, he’d soon teach him how to shoot, with a little *practise*, besides puttin’ him up to a few dodges in warmin’ ketchin’, badger

drorin', &c."—an offer Newton gladly availed himself of, so that before he left Crookham he and the Lancaster became much better acquainted, and Mr. Buncomb had promised to break a pup of one of Sir John's favourite bitches expressly for him, because "he knew now," as Mr. Buncomb said, "how to treat a dog, likewise, wot wos a dog, and what worn't only a cur."

Newton was not very good at the bottle—"little and good" being his motto—so he indulged in only a limited portion of wine, but we regret to say that his friend Edward was not equally prudent, for when he got into the dog-cart at 11 o'clock, he put the reins into Newton's hands, saying:

"It sh'all righ, ol' fla—shold maya nosh-erway. Shrate on an' mine sh-shaw-pit."

After which he lighted a cigar, and fell asleep simultaneously. The cart stood ready to start, and as Newton clambered to the driving-seat he hummed an air.

“Bravo, Mr. Dogvane!” said the Captain, as he took the reins of his own cart. “Give us a song as we trot home. Keep close behind me, and keep to the right going round the corner; there’s an awkward saw-pit there. And now sing away like a wood full of nightingales.”

Thus encouraged, Newton, with an occasional word of advice from William, who was *taking care* of his young master, kept the mare’s nose up to the Captain’s cart, and sung a song, and that right lustily, and then the Captain sang—and the moon shone bright, tipping the bare twigs and the tree-tops with silver, and the tramp, tramp of the horse’s feet beat time to the music.

“He who wears a regimental suit
Oft is as poor as any raw recruit,”

sang the Captain. “Ah!” thought Newton, “he can afford to sing that, for he has lots of tin, but he wouldn’t like to hear it if he hadn’t.

Never mind, he's not such a bad fellow though."

Then they had a duet—the only one Newton knew without the music—"All's well," of course; and they did it with such effect, that they woke Master Neddy, who, hearing some singing in progress, burst out into a loud moan; very loud at first, but dying away in a tremulando movement towards the end, under the idea that he was greatly assisting the chorus and promoting the harmony. After which, he became silent and profoundly contemplative and philosophic. But being well nudged and shaken by William and Newton, he shook off his somnolency and became talkative—quite bright and spry indeed towards the end of the journey, and as he got up stairs somehow, he informed Newton, who was on the landing-place below, in a loud confidential whisper, that "He'd made it awl—awl right—for a day's shack fishn' t'morr." He then kissed one of the maids

who was passing with a candle, and told her that he was sorry to see his friend so intoxicated, told her to take him a "botl o sora-warr irra mornin," and wake him up early enough to go "shack fish'n with him t'morr."

CHAPTER X.

STORM, SUNSHINE, AND JACK FISHING.

“I WISH we could get up those four-part songs,” said Charlotte Bowers, on the ensuing morning, as they sat at breakfast.

“We could manage the glees,” said Captain Stevens, “for Mr. Dogvane sings very nicely.”

Newton blushed, and, although he disclaimed the “nicely,” he allowed that he did sing a little now and then, but only for his own amusement.

“Ah! if you sing for your own amusement, you must sing for ours, you know,” added Bessy, with a bright smile.

“Then we will get up some trios; and we

might even manage a quartet, with Bessy's assistance," said Charlotte. "I do wish you would try and sing, Edward. He really has a nice voice, Mr. Dogvane," she continued, "if he'd only practise."

"I don't think Edward's singing *this* morning would be very much calculated to afford any one much pleasure," said Mrs. Bowers, with intense dignity and a sharp glance at Ned. Ned had a slight headache, and a small appetite for breakfast, and looked decidedly the worse for the sporting dinner of the day before.

The young ladies coloured, looked down, and said nothing; and Ned crimsoned with shame and conscious guilt.

"Listen to me, sir," said his father, laying down the paper. "I have no objection to your enjoying yourself to the very fullest; shoot as much as you please at Sir John's; eat, drink, and be merry how you will, so that your merriment be tempered with some

small share of wisdom; but when a son of mine degrades himself from the position of a gentleman by making a beast of himself, I am penetrated with the deepest concern, sir—the deepest concern. What must your mother and sisters think of you? What must your friend, Mr. Dogvane—who, I am pleased to see, is a young gentleman of good habits and perfect discretion—what must he think of you?”

Mrs. Bowers left the room; Charley and Bessy followed in tears; and then Sissy, saying to herself, as she went, “My! poor Ned—what a wiggling!”

“I did not expect it of you, Ned—I didn’t, indeed;” and the poor old governor, clutching nervously at the paper, got up and went to the window. But the prospect was dim—very dim. There was something in his eye that made the window appear like ground, or rather wavy, glass. Newton, Uncle Crabb, and the Captain looked at one another. Had

a shell fallen amongst them, it could not have produced more dismay upon their countenances. Ned fidgetted for a moment, looked as if he were about to say something, bolted it, got up, and stalked from the room. No one spoke. In a few minutes Newton rose and followed him.

“You are rather hard on the lad, Edward,” said Uncle Crabb.

“I am equally hard upon myself, brother Charles.”

“It’s the first time, Ned.”

“And I trust the last, Charles.”

The Captain walked out on the lawn, and lighted a cigar, like Uncle Toby, whistling *Lillibullero* to himself. Uncle Crabb stole up softly to Ned’s room. Bessy was standing at the door, apparently hesitating whether she should enter or not. There were voices within. Uncle Crabb drew his arm round Bessy’s waist, and they stood at the door—the rough old veteran and the shrinking Lily.

“No, no, no, Newton,” said the voice of Ned, vehemently, “don’t say another word, I can’t bear it; I never was so spoken to in my life—and before the girls, and everybody! It’s too bad, too cruel; I won’t stay in the house another hour, I’m determined.”

“Don’t be foolish, Ned,” said Newton; “listen to me, there’s a good fellow; don’t do a rash thing, which you may ever after bitterly repent of.”

“I’ll go, I’m resolved. No, my boy, don’t speak—not another hour.”

“Where will you go, Ned?”

“Where? I don’t know—anywhere, away from this. I’ll enlist as a common soldier, and be off to the East. My mind’s made up; I won’t stay. I can’t think how—the—gov—ver—nor could—do it,” sobbed poor Ned.

Bessy made a motion towards the handle of the door; but uncle Crabb restrained her.

“Do you think it cost him no effort? Do

you think it didn't cut him to the heart to do it, Ned? Think a moment."

"It was deu—ced—cuc-cruel of him, I—know that," said Ned.

"Will you take my advice, Ned? the advice of an old friend and schoolmate. We were boys together, you know; and I can't advise you, if I wished to, in any other way than for the best—the very best, Ned. You may trust yourself in my hands."

Ned sobbed, but did not answer.

"Look here, old fellow. Swallow your pride, and go down to him in a manly, straightforward way, 'Here I am, sir. I'm deeply sorry to have committed myself and you as I have done. I'm ashamed of myself, and promise to put a restraint upon myself in future, and I ask your forgiveness.' There's nothing to be ashamed of, Ned, nothing mean in asking your governor to forgive you. It's meaner, in my mind, to run away and leave a whole heap of sorrow behind you."

But Ned didn't answer a word; pride battled strongly.

“Shall I tell you what I saw, Ned? I saw the governor looking out of window, evidently to hide his own emotions; and I saw a big, salt tear drop down on the window-sill. You don't know, old fellow, what that tear cost him. Your father!—think of that, Ned. Hang it, don't sob so” (Ned was sobbing convulsively), “or you'll set me off as well as yourself,” whined Newton.

“You're a deuced good fellow, New; I wish I was like you. I'm a precious rip—a scoundrel.”

“No, no, nonsense!—you're nothing of the sort; only you've got your pride, and your—your—monkey up.”

“I'm ashamed of myself. Poor old governor! Hand us that towel, and I'll go down directly and square it.”

The Veteran and the Lily stole away from the door, for they did not wish to be caught listening.

“I don’t think, Lily,” quoth the Veteran, “we can give him better advice than that.”

A shower of tears, falling like dew-drops from the Lily, was her only answer.

“Cockney or countryman, it don’t much matter, so that the heart’s in the right place,” said the Veteran, as he kissed the Lily, and left her at her own chamber-door.

After a few minutes Ned came out, and went down into the breakfast-room. Mr. Bowers was still standing at the window. Father and son were there alone for about twenty minutes, when they came out, and walked arm-in-arm upon the lawn. Newton watched them from his bedroom window. Evidently the reconciliation was perfect; for in a few minutes Ned came bounding up stairs, beaming with delight, and happy as a bird.

“Newton, old fellow, it’s all right; I took your advice, and I’ll never forget the good turn you’ve done me this day, for I was as near bolting off and ’listing as possible. I

told the governor all; and we are better friends, if possible, than ever." And it was evident that Ned had told his father all; for when Newton descended to the door, where the dog-cart was waiting to convey them to the ponds, Mr. Bowers, who was standing by it, superintending the stowing away of a large basket, supposed to contain an extensive lunch, took him by the hand, and, wringing it warmly, said:—

“Thank you, Mr. Dogvane—thank you. Your kindness and excellent advice to my son Edward has given him back to me.” And Uncle Crabb, who arrived at the door at the instant, was about following suit, but checked himself, as a demonstration of that kind would have betrayed that he had been listening; and although in this instance there was nothing mean in the act, still he didn't like it somehow.

The Captain here put in an appearance; and rods, tackle, &c. being all ready, they

took their seats and drove off. Newton felt in such spirits, he really couldn't tell why. Perhaps it was that his friend was once more reconciled to his father, and through his advice; perhaps it was that he thought (but this was the merest fancy) that he saw a pair of bright eyes looking kindly on them from an upper window; and, although they seemed to take in the whole of the cart and its occupants, yet (fancy again) he could not help thinking, if a right line had been drawn between the said eyes and the said cart, that while one end rested upon the eyes, the other would have pierced the peak of his own particular plaid cap. Conceited donkey! eh, young ladies?

It was a good jack-fishing morning, dark and windy, and both Uncle Crabb and the Captain, who were staunch disciples of Izaak Walton, prophesied good sport. The Captain took his gun, for ducks were supposed occasionally to visit the ponds, and they were sure

of a moorhen or a coot, and perhaps a snipe or two.

They soon arrived at the ponds, which consisted of two largish sheets of water—one communicating with the other by a trap; the nearest of them, which was the largest, being some four or five feet above the other, and banked up by a kind of causeway. It was fringed with rushes and reeds, which ran out into the pond for several yards at one end, and here the largest jack were supposed to be. Three or four small islands were scattered about, some near the shore, some far out in the middle; some with a tree or two, and a few low bushes, the others bare. A small stream fed the ponds and ran out at the further end, and, falling into another small stream further on, the two fed the trout stream at Dealmount.

Mr. Buncomb was seen walking towards them with a large bait-kettle in one hand and a landing-net in the other; his retriever at his heels.

“ Mornin’, gen’l’men.”

“ Good morning, Mr. Buncomb. Any chance of sport to-day ? ” asked Uncle Crabb.

“ Hem ! ” quoth Buncomb, looking at the sky ; “ ye med, and ye medn’t. There’s never no sayin.’ Fish is the contrariest, obstinatest, and unaccountablest things as swims. Still they ort fur to bite. Here’s some nice lively baits I ketched this mornin’ in the stream below.” And Mr. Buncomb opened the kettle and showed some dozens of good-sized dace and gudgeon, “ all alive oh ! ”

“ ’Pon my word, they are excellent,” said the Captain. “ Buncomb, you are a prince of providôres.”

“ Yes ; they’re tidyish, Captain ; and if you only catches a jack for every one on ’em, it’s my opinion that this ’ere kettle won’t ’old ’em.”

“ No ; nor that boat either. Any ducks about yet ? ”

“There wos three kipple on the upper eend this mornin’. Likely they’re in the reeds now. Anyhows, there’s a few snips round the other side on that boggy bit by the stream.”

“Very well; then I’ll walk round while you get my tackle ready. Come along Nep;” and Nep followed the gun instinctively—fishing not being, to his mind, a pursuit worthy of the notice of a dog who was anything of a dog. The Captain stopped for a minute to load his gun and light a cigar.

“It’s wery odd now as that ’ere dog won’t take to fishin’,” said Buncomb; “his mother was an uncommon hanimal in that line. I’ve knowed her set and watch my float for ’ours; and if I warn’t by when there come a bite, in she’d go arter the float, and take ’old on it with her teeth, and she wouldn’t leave it till she pulled fish and all ashore. Oncet I set her to watch a trimmer, while I poled across the pond to look at a duck’s nest;

I hadn't been gone ten minutes before I see her jump right down off the bank, and I knowed a fish had struck. The fish was a 'eavy one—sixteen pound—and too much for the dog, for it most pulled her under water; but she wouldn't leave go of the trimmer; and such a pully-hauly there was as you never see. Sometimes she'd get the best on't, and sometimes the jack 'd make a roosh, and down went her 'ead under water, and if I hadn't a come up in the boat just in time when I did, that 'ere dog 'ud 'a been drowned to a moral."

"Mr. Jesse an acquaintance of yours, Buncomb?" asked Uncle Crabb.

"Never see or hear of the gen'l'man, sir," answered Buncomb.

"That's a pity," said Crabb.

"Werry likely," said Buncomb.

"What do you think of that anecdote?" asked Newton.

Uncle Crabb looked doubtful, and said
“Bunkum.”

“What shall I put on for you, Captain?”

“Spinning tackle. You’ll find some traces in that box. Put on a good-sized dace, and let it lie till it gets stiff; it’ll spin better,” and the Captain, shouldering his gun, once more whistled to Nep, and the pair went off in company.

Buncomb was busy for awhile with the Captain’s rod and tackle.

“By the way,” said Ned, “what sort of a hand are you at jack-fishing, Newton? I know you are a fisherman. But are you up to this?”

“Well, no; I can’t say I am much of a hand at it, though I am very fond of fishing.”

“We’d better put Mr. Rainber on a live bait then,” quoth Buncomb, looking up.

Uncle Crabb and Ned looked at one another for a moment, then at New, and finally laughed

heartily. Newton looked rather red and angry, slightly disgusted.

“This gentleman’s name is Dogvane, Buncomb,” said Ned.

“I’m sure I begs the gentleman’s parding. I thought I heerd Misser Cha’s call him Rainber yesterday.”

“So you did, Buncomb,” answered Crabb. “But I don’t mean to call him so any more, and beg to apologize to him for ever having done so. It was only a stupid allusion to the rainbow plaid, which I prophesied would prove attractive to the Squire’s bull. By the way, I hope that bull is shut in to-day, or he may take it into his head to spoil our sport.”

“Oh, yes, sir; he’s shut in right enough. I see to that myself. Ye see, mas’r’s had two or three rows with the Squire about that ’ere bull; but the Squire’s a bullyin’, braggin’, low sort of a feller, and swears he’s a right to graze here—and perhaps he has; and ye see, mas’r don’t like to be at loggerheads with his

neighbours, though it's difficult to keep out on 'em with some folks; and if we got to rowing, he mightn't choose to shut him up at all, which would be a pretty start when wev'e got a fishin' party. At other times I don't so much mind it, for that bull's better nor a dozen keepers to these ponds, and saves me a deal of trouble; for not a poacher dares come nighst 'im since he broke that scamp Joe Reek's collar-bone and punched two holes in his trowsers, not to mention half drowning of him, as he wur a settin' some night-lines. No, no; he's all right enough, I'll answer.—Oh! you're a goin' to spin too?"

"Yes," said Uncle Crabb, holding up a most horrible and deadly-looking apparatus — a series of triangularly placed hooks, to which he was attaching a large gudgeon.

"And what 'll you do, Master Ed'ard?"

"Well, I don't know, Buncomb; spinning seems the order of the day, and Mr. Dogvane is going to live-bait; so I've a good

mind to fish either with a gorge, or to catch perch."

"Oh, bother perch, I likes a gorge myself. Jack takes a gorge when they air on the feed, as well as a spinnin' bait; and when they air hooked, why they air, and there's no losin' 'em like there is at spinnin'. No, no, I'll rig you up a gorge in a jiffy, if you've got ar a bit o' silk 'andy."

Just then the Captain's gun was heard, followed by the pit-pit-pitting of the shot on the water, and five ducks appeared above the reeds, and, after scouring and whirling round and round for some time, made for the further end of the other pool.

"Hum! the Captain's potted one on em; wonders why he didn't fire t'other barrel," said Buncomb.

The other barrel went off, and "scape, scape," went a couple of snipe, as they flew up further, and further up, till they were lost in the blue air.

“Oh!” said Buncomb, “I s’pose he’d only got snip shot in t’other bar’l. There’s ould Nep a swimmin’ in arter the duck, and there, the Cap’n’s picked up summat. Snip I reckons. He do shoot! Ah! he do shoot, Mas’r Ned! I wish I could get you to shoot like the Cap’n. If you’d only shoot a leetle forrerder, wot a lot more Saireys and bunnies you would put the kibosh on to—to be sure—I never see but one as shot as well as the Cap’n, and that’s the Hemperor, your guv’nor, Mas’r Ned, and he used to shoot a bit. Ah! above a bit! Lor! ’ow he used to down ’em, with that werry gun you shooted with yesterday.”

“Very odd,” answered Ned; “I never can shoot with it.”

“That’s cause you don’t ’old it as the Hemperor’d used to.”

Bang, bang, went the Captain’s gun, and the scape of a single snipe was heard over the pond. Meantime Mr. Buncomb, although he

talked, did not neglect his work, and arranged the tackle, put baits on, &c.

“Fish round the edge first—ch, Buncomb?” asked Uncle Crabb.

“If you please, sir; then we shan’t disturb the pond if we launches the boat. You two gents, go on, and I’ll set Muster Dogswun in the way, as he aint werry good at it;” and Ned and Uncle Crabb took their ways to their separate beats.

Newton had put his rod together and got his line out, &c. &c., and Mr. Buncomb, putting a heavy cork float about a yard up the line, tied a gimp hook on to the end, and slipped the hook through the nose of a good-sized lively dace.

“Now, sir, you throw in like that, jest hopposite that island; and when you sees a run, let him ’ave it as long as he likes, so as to gorge it.”

Mr. Buncomb suited the action to the word, and threw out the bait, and handed the rod to

Newton, who stood anxiously watching his float as it sailed about, drawn hither and thither by the bait. Presently down went the float with a dash; and Newton, as he had always been accustomed to in his fishing experience, struck directly. There was a slight resistance, and then the bait came up by itself, terribly mangled and cut about, as if it had been slashed by a razor.

“What on arth? Lord, sir! you maunt strike like that! Give ’em time to pouch. Jacks don’t bolt a fish at the first go. You must give ’em time, say two or three minutes, and let ’em go wheres’ever they choses. Look ye here, sir. If you don’t mind my ’oldin’ the rod for a minute, just till I ’ooks one, I’ll show ye,” said Mr. Buncomb, as he tossed the dead bait into the water, and fixed another on the hook.

“Well, I did mean to give him time, but I was rather nervous, and struck without intending it,” answered Newton.

Mr. Buncomb threw in the bait again, near about the same spot.

“That must have been a very large fish to have mangled the bait like that,” said Newton.

“That don’t foller,” said Mr. Buncomb, as the float once more disappeared; “a jack o’ three or four pounds ’ud a sarved it just as bad.”

“There’s a bite; he’s got it again,” said Newton, in an agitated whisper.

“Ah! I sees ’im,” answered Buncomb, paying out line with his hand, as the fish sailed off towards some weeds with its prey. Having reached them, it remained quiet. Presently up came the float with a bob. “Rat the beggar!” said Buncomb, “he’s left it. Your pullin’ at him has scared him a bit; not as how as that ’ud matter a bit if he was hungry; for I’ve knowed ’em jump clean out of the landing-net, arter they was most killed, and carry off hook and all, and then

come and get cõtched ten minutes arter. They arn't to be stalled off with a scratch when they're 'ungry."

The hook came up minus the bait.

"Cut it off, eh?" said Buncomb. "Artful warmint! Now I'll just sniggle him." And Mr. Buncomb hooked the next bait on by the back-fin, and, placing the bait in the water at the edge of the pond, gave the jack time to dispose of his capture, while he lighted his pipe, looked sternly at the weed, and nodded gravely, as much as to say, "you're there, are you, my buck? See if I don't pay you out now." Gathering up the tackle, he threw in again, and the jack had evidently only just whetted his appetite; for scarcely had the float taken up its position, when it disappeared in the same direction as before, and again remained still, after taking out a yard or two of line. This time, however, the float stopped for a minute or two under water, and a few shakings and jerkings

at the line told that the jack was wreaking his vengeance on the unfortunate dace, preparatory to swallowing it. Presently all was still; the line then began to move slightly, and Buncomb, raising the point of the rod with a smart tug, "had him," as he said, "under a sewere course o' steel." The top of the rod bent smartly, and the fish plunged violently. Buncomb handed the rod to Newton; and, after a fair resistance, and a due amount of rushing here, there, and everywhere, Newton, according to Buncomb's directions, shortened in line, and the fish was hauled, rather than led, towards the landing-net, his extended jaws grinning horribly at them, and shaking savagely to and fro across the line as Newton pulled his head above water. With a glow of intense delight and satisfaction, with every nerve thrilling with excitement, such as only a young angler feels over his first large capture, or the more advanced one over his

first salmon, Newton saw his victim within the meshes of the net, and then drawn from his native element to the shore, still kicking and plunging.

Captain Stevens approached just as the fish was landed.

“What a beauty! what a splendid fish! Isn’t he a noble fish, Captain Stevens?” asked Newton, rapturously.

“Nice, well-fed little fish,” said the Captain, turning it over as it lay kicking on the ground, with the utmost *sang froid*; “about four pounds, I should say. Eh, Buncomb?”

“That’s about his calybore” (calibre?), answered Buncomb, searching for his knife. “We must cut this ’ere ’ook off, and put on another; the brute’s swallered it, and a disgorger aint no use.”

“Little fish!” said Newton, his face depicting decided disappointment at the Captain’s coolness. As for Nep, he merely smelt at the fish, which gave him a slap on the nose with

its tail, and elicited a low growl from him. After this little performance Nep turned away and sat down, taking no further notice of it. Even *he* did not appear to think it anything extraordinary.

“Lord bless you, sir! that aint nothin’, that aint,” said Buncomb, tying on another hook. “There’s some here as ’ll weigh six of him, if not seven. I knows there’s one or two as ’ll go ’andy to five-and-twenty pounds weight, if not more. There ye are now, all ready again. Chuck in just by that eend o’ the island, the water’s deeper there. It goes off werry shaller towards t’other eend—’taint above three foot there, so it’s no use trying that; but you’ll find nine or ten foot below. I sees Muster Cha’s has something ’eavy there, by his ’oldin’ up his ’and. I’ll just run and lend him a ’and. Your rod’s at your fav’rite cast round that pint there, Captin;” and the Captain, wishing Newton good sport, walked off towards it,

while Mr. Buncomb hastened off to Uncle Crabb's assistance.

Newton threw in his bait as soon as he was left by himself, but nothing came of it. After waiting some time, during which he saw Mr. Buncomb and Uncle Crabb land a largish fish in the distance, he drew his bait gently along the top of the water, resolving to try the water further on. Just as he was passing a sort of little gully or inlet, which was fringed with reeds, he heard a splash, felt a slight tug at his line, and, on turning sharply round, he saw the dull green and white form of a large fish, evidently bent upon making off with his prey. Newton had lowered the point of his rod, which was over his shoulder; but the fish did not seem to require any line, for he lay quite still close to the rushes. The float was on the top of the water, but showed by its frequent bobbings and shakings that the foe was still busy some three or four feet below. Oh, how Newton's

heart did beat during those two or three succeeding minutes! It was no use his saying to himself, "New, my boy, be calm. Don't be flurried. Take it coolly." He couldn't be calm; he couldn't help being flurried; and as to taking it coolly, his hand trembled so, that the very line and rings rattled against the rod as if old Hickory had been seized with the ague. He had seen what seemed to him a perfect monster.—(The water possesses most singular magnifying powers, there is no doubt of that. We have seen a fish, that weighed at least ten pounds in the water, reduced to less than half that size upon changing its element; and if, by any good luck upon the fish's part, he manages to prevent that, to him, undesirable change, we are quite unable and afraid to say how many extra pounds he carries away upon his already overloaded carcass.)—Still, that Newton's fish, *in prospectu*, was a large one, was pretty certain, and Newton waited, watching his

float in a state of considerable excitement and perturbation. At length the fish moved, and up went the rod with a smart stroke. There was a slight pause on the part of the fish; he was evidently hugely surprised. What the dickens was that sharp, tickling, unpleasant sensation in his throat? It couldn't be the back fin of a perch! No—for Monsieur Pike hated perch with a fervent hatred, and never chose his dinner from that species of fish when he could help it. A drag, followed by a choking feeling, as if his stomach was being pulled up into his throat. "Hallo! I shan't stay here to be treated in this way. Here, come, let go, can't you? Oh! well, then, look out for squalls! I'm off." And away he went towards the middle of the pond; and Newton, for the first time in his life, heard the glorious music of the reel. Ring! rattle! whir! and having made a good thirty yards rush, he stopped and appeared to consider; then, as if he was determined to see what it

was that caused him such annoyance, he turned round and shot back to the place he came from; and there he might have seen—possibly he did see—a huge two-legged creature, clad in a gorgeous coat of divers colours, very red as to his face, with a generally agitated appearance, endeavouring to reel in the loose line, at the end of which was that confounded little barbed toothpick, which began to cause him such desperately unpleasant sensations. But an auxiliary was at hand. The fish was sailing sharply along the shore, and Newton was still endeavouring with trembling, and consequently bungling fingers, to reel in the loose line, as he followed him up—when from behind there came a loud unearthly roar. He turned his head over his shoulder, and there he beheld, some fifty or sixty yards off, but bearing straight down upon him, a large and savage bull—tail up, head down, fire in his eye, and his whole appearance evincing a strong desire to become speedily and more

nearly acquainted with that rainbow-plaid than was altogether satisfactory to its wearer.

It was of no use hesitating; as to facing such a beast as that, it wasn't to be thought of for one moment!—(We have heard sundry tales about facing bulls, and awing them by the majesty of the human eye. It may have been done, we don't dispute it, although we can't help having our own opinion that it is an ocular delusion. At any rate, when run at by bulls, which has happened once or twice, we never felt any inclination to try the experiment, but invariably bolted as hard as our legs (moderately long ones) would carry us. (Humiliating, no doubt, but we got safe off.)—The bull was before, every stride bringing him closer and closer; half a minute, or even less, would do the business; the pond was behind; Newton must make a swim for it. If he could reach the island, there was a tree he could easily climb into, in case the bull took the water. It wasn't above thirty

or forty yards off. "Here goes, then," thought Newton, and he forthwith plunged into the pond! it did not come above his waist. He glanced round, and he found by good luck that he had chosen the shallow, which Buncomb had noticed as not being above three feet deep; so he struggled on at a half run for the island. The bull, at the sudden disappearance of his enemy behind the reeds, made a slight pause, which Newton, of course, took what possibly in the bull's eyes was a "mean" advantage of, to increase his distance from the shore; so that when the bull trotted slowly up to the edge of the pond, he beheld the object which had so attracted his attention dashing and splashing away, more than half-way across to the island. Again he paused, tore up the turf with his horns, and bellowed with rage. Newton gained the bank. As he scrambled out he looked back, and saw the bull apparently just sounding the depth of the water with his fore-legs.

“By Jove, he’s coming after me,” thought Newton; “so, as it seems there’s no safety on earth or water, we must try the air, and do a bit of climbing.”

Fortunately again, the tree was easy to climb, and Newton swung himself up from branch to branch, until he was well aloft and out of all danger; and the bull, when he emerged from the water, found that his prey had again escaped him, and stood looking about with a remarkably puzzled expression. Finding himself safe, Newton began to pelt him with twigs and broken pieces of stick, which had the effect of causing him to make a rapid tour of the island; during which, Newton, on looking down, saw his rod, which he had only quitted when he was about to mount the tree, leaning against an overhanging branch. The top was within reach, and he suddenly remembered the famous fish which that confounded bull had doubtless been the cause of his losing. However, as

the bull in his vagaries might run against the rod and break it, he thought that he might as well draw it up out of harm's way; so, reaching down until he got hold of the top, he gradually, with some trouble, pulled it up until he got hold of the butt. He commenced winding in the line—there was a good deal of it run out—but after winding in a few yards, he came to a full stop. The fish had hung himself up in a large bunch of weeds, which he distinctly saw move as he pulled at it; and “Was it possible? No; yes. There it was again; a tug, and no mistake about it; the fish was on still. Oh, if he could only get down!” But there stood that beast of a bull, occasionally giving a low bellow, and evidently waiting for him.

But relief was at hand. The Captain had seen the whole adventure—the punt was at no very great distance—and wisely considering that it would be decidedly the best mode of approaching the scene of action, he stepped

into it with his gun, and poled away for the island. As he approached it, he laid down the pole and loaded his gun—one barrel with snipe shot; the other, in case the first should not prove sufficiently persuasive, with No. 2's.

“Can I do anything for you?” he said, smiling at the figure Newton cut in the tree.

“If you can manage to poke or rake away that weed there—I think I've got a precious great fish on.”

The Captain pushed towards the weed and took hold of the line, to see in which direction it was fast; there was no doubt the fish was on, as the violent swaying of the weed indicated; so, taking care not to hook the line, the Captain, by throwing the anchor out beyond it and dragging it slowly in, managed to sever the connection between the weed and the bottom. A huge lump of the weed and rush now floated up, and he pulled away as much as he could; but a considerable bunch still

remained on the line, and the towing of this about very soon brought the pike to a standstill.

“Shorten in all you can,” said the Captain. Newton did so. “First time I ever saw a fish played from the top of a tree. Rather awkward, isn’t it?”

“Confoundedly,” answered Newton. “I can’t get the rod up properly.”

“Never mind; I think he has devoured his last dace. Faith! he must be uncommonly well hooked; I wonder he didn’t twist off, though he couldn’t break you, because the weed is too buoyant to afford him a fair pull. Ah! he’s a good fish. I wish Buncomb and his landing-net were here,” continued the Captain, making ineffectual efforts to get at the fish. “I really don’t see how we can land him without towing him ashore in some shallow place; for this troublesome weed prevents my getting at him fairly.”

“That would be the best way,” said New-

ton from the tree; "and if you'll just give the bull a hint to be off, I'll come down, and you can take me on board."

"Just so," said the Captain, coolly cocking his gun. "Don't keep too tight a strain on the fish, or he'll break you even now; for he's still strong. Let him tow that bunch of weed about. Now let's see. We'll try the effect of snipe-shot at thirty yards first. Friend Taurus, your presence is no longer desirable"—and the bang of the Captain's gun was followed by a loud roar from the bull, who rushed in a frantic rage round and round the little islet, crashing through the brushwood, and finally dashing his horns against the tree with such force as to make it tremble again; but he did not leave the island.

"Hem!" said the Captain, again. "They say persuasion's better than force; we've tried persuasion, now we'll try force;" so, pushing the boat a few yards nearer, he let the bull have the full charge of No. 2, hot and strong,

in the region of his tail. It was too much ; beef couldn't stand it ; and, with a tremendous roar and a frantic rush, he dashed into the deepest part of the water, and swam to the main land, bellowing with pain and fury. Arrived there, he did not stop for a moment, but, scrambling out, went off at a high gallop, with his tail stuck out like a pump-handle. 'Twixt fear and rage, it is supposed he did not stop in his headlong course till he found himself once more in his own location.

"I thought I should prevail on him to depart," quoth the Captain, pushing on to the island.

"I thought so too," answered Newton, "seeing what powerful arguments you used.

Newton descended, and, getting into the boat, they soon stood upon the shore ; and, with very little difficulty, they got the fish into a shallow corner, and landed him ; and Newton in his delight forgot the bull, his wet

clothes, and everything else that was unpleasant.

“What should you think he’ll weigh?” he asked. “Will he weigh twenty pounds?” Newton was not much of a judge of the weight of large fish.

“No, no, no,” said the Captain; “but he’s a good fish for all that. He’ll go about eleven and a half or twelve. I congratulate you; I’ve no doubt it’s the biggest yet.”

Uncle Crabb, Ned, and Buncomb, who had watched the whole adventure from the distance, here came running up. They were considerably alarmed at first, but when they saw the termination of the adventure, they all joined in a hearty laugh.

“But come, Mr. Dogvane,” said Uncle Crabb, “we must not keep you here. You’re wet through. Take a drop of this brandy. There’s a public-house about a third of a mile from this, where I always keep a dry change of old things; for I often get wet

through when I come here fishing or wild-fowl shooting. So put yourself into a sharp trot, and I'll go with you and see you rigged out afresh; and if, after that, you like to come back and renew your sport, you can. Come along. We'll get off those plaids. My words about Squire Driffield's bull seem quite prophetic." And, putting themselves into a trot, they left Ned, Buncomb, and the Captain to pursue their sport, and hastened off to The Feathers, a hostelry kept by J. Jinks.

The change was speedily effected, and Newton felt all the better for it.

"Sit down before the fire for a quarter of an hour, to be certain of getting the chill out of you, and take a drop of hot brandy-and-water," said Uncle Crabb.

They proceeded to the kitchen, where was a huge fire of roots and knots, crackling and blazing — the ceiling being garnished with a large bacon-rack, uncommonly well filled too.

“There; go in there and sit down,” he continued, pushing Newton in. There were three or four persons in the room, who all made way for him; and, sitting by the fire, he basked in the blaze.

“Jinks, come and show me those terrier pups;” and Uncle Crabb and the landlord vanished together.

There was a very old woman—the landlord’s mother—sitting in the ingle-nook, warming her lean hands over the blaze, and nodding her head from time to time, like a clockwork figure, as she mumbled to herself; and a neat, tolerably well-dressed woman, with a chubby, laughing babe, sat upon the other side warming its little toes. The child opened its great round eyes, and stared at the skinny old dame with all its little might. It was a strange and powerful contrast, that extreme age and extreme youth. The woman was waiting for the omnibus, which passed twice a day to a railway-station some six

miles distant. Newton sat smoking his cigar and looking at the two alternately for some minutes. Presently, finding the fire rather warm, he got up and walked to the window, which commanded a view of the road, and stood there looking out. A gentleman and two ladies passed. They eyed the house, noticed Newton, and passed on. It was Mr. and the Misses Sharp.

“My!” “Did you see that?” and “Astounding, the brass of some folks!” broke from the trio simultaneously.

“The gentleman, if you can call him a gentleman, whom we saw at Mr. Bowers’s,” said the first sister.

“If, indeed! — gentleman! — smoking a cigar at a low pot-house window!” said the second.

“Gentleman! by Gad! Some low blaygyard young Ned’s been and picked up in his prowlings about the slums of the metropolis,” said the brother, who was, of

course, disgusted that the new man hadn't hooked on to one or the other of his charming sisters.

Now it happened that this little conversation was carried on as they slowly walked along a hedge. It also happened that this hedge separated the roadway from the garden appertaining to The Feathers. It still further happened that a dog-kennel, containing some terrier puppies, was placed just inside this hedge; and, by a still stranger coincidence, Uncle Crabb happened to be at that very identical moment stooping down, looking at these puppies, and consequently heard most of this delightful conversation. Accordingly he straightened himself suddenly, and thus brought his countenance, which had a most malicious grin upon it, just above the hedge, and within three or four feet of Mr. Sharp's.

“Good morning, ladies. Good morning, Mr. Sharp. It affords me the greatest

pleasure to see you at this interesting juncture."

And so it did, without doubt, though we very much question if the pleasure was by any means reciprocal, for the faces of the Sharps betrayed surprise and a something between fright and annoyance.

"A—how de do? I'm sure," said Mr. Sharp, so suddenly staggered by the apparition that he hardly knew what he was saying, "A—we—talk of the—"

"Just so," said Uncle Crabb, accepting the simile and the title it conveyed gracefully.

"No, no—I don't mean that—we—that is—we were just talking of a friend of yours."

"Were you, indeed?" said Uncle Crabb, significantly. "I thought it had rather been some friend of your own, from the appropriate terms you spoke of him in. Good morning, ladies. Good morning, Mr. Sharp. I am really very sorry to run away from you; but I am just going

to smoke a *pipe* with a gentleman, 'if, indeed, you can call him a gentleman.' Good morning, Mr. Sharp. I'll be sure and remember you to Ned and his 'low friend'—Sharp was an awful coward—"and allow me to advise you in future"—Uncle Crabb began to boil over—"to be sure that the object of your abuse has no friends present; allow me to advise you so, sir. Good morning, sir." And away walked Uncle Crabb in a towering passion, leaving the Sharps in a pleasant state of vexation, rage, and consternation.

"Well, mother," said Uncle Crabb, as he entered the kitchen, to the old woman in the chimney-corner, "how goes it?" The old woman only replied by a desperate paralytic jerk of that crazy old nob, which looked to Newton as if such another jerk would infallibly jerk it off into the fire, whence he had a grotesque sort of prevision of fishing it with the tongs.

"How's your mother, Jinks?" asked

Uncle Crabb of the landlord, who had followed him into the room.

“Pretty well, sir, if it worn’t for the rheumatiz.”

“The what?” asked Uncle Crabb, with some little distaste.

“The rheumatiz, sir.”

“Oh! the rheumatiz, eh! Do you know the best cure for the rheumatiz?” emphasizing the ultimate.

“No, sir; I wishes I did.”

“Rub it with some *mustardism*,” said Uncle Crabb, sourly.

“Some what, sir?”

“Some *mustardism*, Jinks—*mustardism* fine thing. D—n Sharp, d—n his sisters, d—n the whole family!” continued Uncle Crabb, kicking a three-legged stool viciously.

Jinks grinned, looked queerly at Uncle Crabb, but said no more.

The baby began to fret a little, and the mother spoke to it in nurse’s language—

“Did its cherubs, then, burn its toesy woesy, a ducksey wucksey?”

“Ma’am,” said Uncle Crabb, sharply, “Do you expect that child ever to talk English?”

“Yes, sir, I hope so, I’m sure,” answered the mother, somewhat abashed.

“Then why don’t you talk English to it?”

“Prefers the *mother-tongue*, I suppose,” quoth Newton, amused.

The mother looked a little crossly at Uncle Crabb; but when the omnibus drew up at the door, he put her into it so kindly, and held the baby so tenderly—chucking it under the chin, and poking its dimpled face with his finger, that he brought a laugh into the infant’s face, and a thankful smile into the mother’s. Odd fish was Uncle Crabb.

A very tall and stout man got down from the omnibus and entered the kitchen; he was dressed in the fashion of a well-to-do farmer, and displayed a broad-skirted dark green coat, with drab cords and gaiters; he had a sun-

bright, brickdust-coloured face, deepening in places to purple. His eye was an ill-tempered, bullying, overbearing one; and he had had just enough to drink to make him shine in his true colours.

“Squire Driffield, the man whose bull you made the acquaintance of,” whispered Uncle Crabb.

The Squire called for some hot gin-and-water, and nodded scowlingly to all round.

“Been to the match, Squire?” asked Mr. Jinks.

“Yes, and, by ——, it was the worst single-stick play I ever saw in my life. Single-stick! Why, they played like a couple of fal-lal boarding-school girls with knitting-needles. But, somehow, Dusty Bob managed to drop on the Sweep’s pate in the end, and I lost my money. Talking o’ that, I hear some un’s been a shootin’ at my bull;” and he looked sternly at Uncle Crabb. “I only wish I knowed who’d done it, I’d show ’um some

single-stick play;" and he whirled his ash stick round through his fingers in a rapid, showy manner, and then brought it violently in contact with the floor; "I'd dust their jackets for um. Now, what I say is this—I've common right o' grazin' by them ponds, and, d—n me, if I shuts my bull up for any Sir Johns, or any of their Jimmy Jessamy friends; he may toss half the county, if he likes, and I'll whack t'other half within a inch o' their lives if they molestys un." And he looked fixedly again at Uncle Crabb.

Meanwhile three or four people dropped in, and being half dependants, and half admirers, and whole toadies, of the Squire's, that worthy grew noisier.

"I don't care who a tosses, not I."

"You don't, don't you?" said Uncle Crabb.

"No, I don't; and what then?" said the Squire, angrily.

"Why, this; to-day that bull has placed this young gentleman's life in jeopardy."

“And did he pepper my bull?” asked the Squire, savagely.

“No, he did not; that piece of service was rendered by another party.”

“I’d a dusted his jacket for—”

“Would you, indeed?” said Newton, jumping up angrily, and upsetting a glass in his heat.

“Sit down, my lad,” said Uncle Crabb, looking at him with pleasure and surprise, and laying his hands upon Newton’s shoulders as he gently pressed him down again. “Sit down: this big bully is more than a match for you, and you’d only come off with broken bones.”

Newton looked very wroth, but was silent—not from any fear though.

“That’s the truest thing you’ve said yet,” said the Squire, with an ugly grin.

“It’s no truer than what I am about to say. I am coming down to shoot at the ponds on Saturday next, and I advise you to tie your bull up.”

“I shan’t for you, nor nobody,” roared the Squire.

“So much the worse for the bull then; for, if he makes himself unpleasant to me, I’ll put a bullet through his head, as sure as your name’s Driffield.”

“Will you, by ——?”

“Ay, will I,” said Uncle Crabb, “as certainly as I would through your own, if you ventured to put your unwieldy paw upon me.”

And Uncle Crabb said this so fiercely, and looked the Squire so steadily in the eye, that the bully felt cowed for a moment, and strove to hide his discomfiture by a kind of low banter; and he said sneeringly:—

“And you belongs to one of the larned professions!”

“And you to one of the ignorant ones.”

Uncle Crabb turned towards the fire as soon as he saw he had produced an effect. At this moment Captain Stevens and Ned

entered, followed by Buncomb, who bore the basket of lunch with him.

“You wanted to dust somebody’s jacket just now, I believe,” said Uncle Crabb, to the Squire. “There’s the gentleman who peppered your bull,” pointing to the Captain. “Undertake him, if you like, and much good may it do you.”

“I’ll make un smart for it,” growled the Squire.

“Will you? we shall see.”

“We thought you’d need some lunch,” said the Captain, “so, as we did not care to be so selfish as to lunch alone, we’ve brought the basket up with us. Move those glasses further up, and clear this end of the table, Buncomb.”

Buncomb moved one or two, and was about pushing the Squire’s gin-and-water a foot or two up the table to make room for the cloth.

“Leave that glass bide!” thundered the Squire.

“Eh!” said the Captain, looking with amazement at the angry giant.

“Leave that glass be!”

“Oh! certainly, though you need not enforce your wishes quite so boisterously. There—that will not interfere with the gentleman’s glass, Buncomb. Put the pie there—that’s it;” and the Captain took his seat.

The others moved towards the table, when the Squire, thinking he had at last found a fitting object to wreak his passion on, and fancying from the Captain’s quiet submission that he was afraid of him, jumped up and slapped the table with his ash-stick, making the glasses jump and the room ring.

“Now then, you, sir!” and he flourished the stick.

“Mercy on us! Is the man out of his senses?” said the Captain. “What do you mean, sir? Are you talking to me?”

“Ah! you—devil a less! What do *you* mean by shooting at my bull?”

“Oh, bother your bull, if that remarkably dangerous animal by the water-side belongs to you.”

“Bother my bull! But I’m bother’d if I don’t bother you for bothering of him.”

All this was said with a dogged determination to have a row.

Nep gave a low growl.

“Be quiet, Nep. Leave the gentleman’s calves alone.”

The Squire winced a little, and looked down.

“Sit down, sir; it’s ill talking to a hungry man. You know the saying, ‘A hungry man is an angry man.’ I don’t want to lose my temper and spoil my lunch. If you’ve anything to say, I’ll attend to it after I have eaten. Pie, Charles? I don’t know what they have done with the egg.” And the Captain took no further notice of the Squire, but proceeded to forage the contents of the pie as coolly as if there had been no such person in existence as the Squire.

The Squire sat down, muttering, "Ye won't get off like that, I tell ye. Temper, ecod! I'll temper ye!" and he sat watching each morsel, until their lunch was ended, when the Captain, pouring out half a tumbler of sherry, filled it up with a little hot water, and added thereto a lump of sugar, and having tasted it to see that it was mixed to his entire satisfaction, lighted a cigar and began to smoke slowly and with the utmost composure.

"Well!" said the Squire, who had bottled up his rage till it almost boiled over.

"Well!" said the Captain. "It seems, my friend, that you have some desire apparently to pick a quarrel with me. I never quarrel; it wastes words. As for your bull, you deserve to be kicked out of the parish for having such a dangerous beast and allowing it to be at large for a moment. However, if he annoys me, of course I disperse him to the best of my ability; that is a matter

between the bull and myself. But your making all this noise, and your manner of address, is disagreeable to every one here ; in fact, you are a greater nuisance than your bull. You have flourished that bit of ash at me ; that is a matter between you and me. I never allow people to flourish sticks at me. I generally knock them down when they do ; but, being hungry, I've given you a respite. You pretend, I understand, to some science in the art of single-stick. I will take you at your own weapons, and will give you an opportunity of proving your science. A—in fact, I'll give you a lesson gratis ; and I hope and trust that it *will* be a lesson to you. It shall not be my fault if you don't remember it and profit by it." The Captain reached round to his fishing-rod, and drew out the trolling-top, a springy joint of tough hickory, about the bigness of a common penny cane, or a little smaller, and about a yard in length, ending in about a foot of whalebone, and a stout

brass ring. He gave it two or three switches to try its springiness; and then, turning round towards his antagonist, without moving from his chair, or even taking his cigar from his mouth, he said—"Put up your stick, or I'll kick you into the road."

"Get up!" said the Squire, secretly pleased at the apparently slight weapon the Captain had chosen; that couldn't afford much guard, he imagined; though all this excessive coolness rather staggered him. But he thought it was what is vulgarly called bounce and show-off, and comforted himself with that idea. Moreover, the Captain lacked at least three inches of his height—a very considerable advantage in single-stick; and as for bone and muscle, there did not appear to be any comparison between them, though the Squire little knew what there was bound up in that apparently slight form. "Get up!"

"I could not think of disturbing myself. Put up your stick."

“Mind, it’s your own choice—don’t thee blame me,” said the Squire.

“Never fear; I won’t blame you, if you don’t blame yourself.”

Newton trembled for the Captain. The giant seemed to stand towering over him with his powerful ash stick, looking as if he had only to fall upon him to crush him. There was a dead silence in the room. The Captain still smoked his cigar most composedly. It was a picture; the old crone, seeing by their looks that something extraordinary was going on, peered round the corner of the chimney, and her bleared eyes glistened like two coals of fire from the seeming fog that surrounded them. The Squire threw himself into a splendid attitude, and certainly, if attitude would have thrashed his opponent, it was a “horse to a handsaw.” The Captain merely held his taper-glistening wand up, a little inclining over his right shoulder. The giant meditated for the least fraction of a

second where the blow should fall, and consequently was the least fraction of a second too late. There was a slight flash through a ray of light that shone between them, and the least possible visible turn of the Captain's wrist, and like lightning the cut fell. The bully uttered a yell of agony as he dashed down his stick, and with both hands to his face, which already streamed with blood, rushed from the room with his cheek cut open to the very bone, from eye to chin.

"I'm afraid it was rather hot," said the Captain, as he turned once more to the fire, wiped the joint carefully, and then laid the top with the rest of the rod, as if nothing had happened; "but, confound him, he deserved it."

Uncle Crabb uttered a grunt of pleasure, and then *went out to dress the cut*. The old crone's eyes glistened brighter than ever, and she nodded paralytic nods by the score, and chuckled audibly.

“ I’ll learn single-stick the instant I get to London,” said Newton to himself. “ What a jolly thing to be able to walk into a bully at his own game !”

CHAPTER XI.

NEWTON PERFORMS BEFORE "THE RAG."

"IF I could find a nice quiet prad, now, I'd have half an hour's canter in the park," said our friend Newton to himself, shortly after his return from Crookham.

It was a sharp, brisk day, with a little sunshine—just enough to remind one that the autumn had not yet quite departed. Newton was tired of signing his name and reading the papers; and, his father being actively engaged in his own office, he could well be spared. He had been dull, *distract*, and uneasy ever since his visit to Crookham. He felt inclined for a little rapid exercise,

just to get rid of the vapours,—and under these circumstances he spoke the above words.

Newton's equestrian experience was not extensive. He had ridden donkeys at Ramsgate, ponies at Herne Bay, and taken a few very trifling lessons of a riding-master at Brighton, and sometimes took a sly airing in the park, or out into the country, when he could get a horse which he felt sure would not run away with him; and during the latter part of his visit to Crookham he had rubbed up and improved upon what little he knew, by riding out occasionally with Ned and Charlotte, or Bessie (the young ladies took turns, having only one horse between them). Captain Stevens lent Newton a very quiet, steady old hack, and Ned did his best to make his friend tolerably proficient in the art; on one occasion getting Newton's horse over a ditch, and Newton into it: and upon a subsequent one, over a hurdle, and on to his

horse's ears, much to the amusement of Miss Charlotte, who happened to be present on both occasions. We question whether he would have attempted it had *Bessie* been there instead of her sister. Still, with all this experience, he did not feel himself qualified to mount anything strange, or which was not warranted quite quiet and free from vice. This morning, however, he thought he would take a little turn; and, looking into his father's room, he merely said he was going out for half an hour, and sauntered away to Bobtail's yard in search of a "nice quiet prad."

"Got anything in that'll suit me?" he asked of the head man of the yard—a mildewy, undersized homunculus, with very bowed legs and a flat head, with a pervading flavour of stable, tobacco, and beer about him.

"What 'ud you like, sir?" was the very natural reply.

"Oh, something quiet, without any tricks

or vice about him," answered Newton, in an off-hand manner.

"Suit you to a T, sir," quoth the groom, whose name was Tuesday—at least if it was not Tuesday, he answered to that cognomen, which did as well as if the whole bench of bishops had stood sponsors to it.

"Bring forth the 'orse," said Mr. Tuesday, waving his arm with a theatrical air to a helper, who was engaged in looking on, rubbing his hands with a wisp of hay, and chewing a stalk of the same on one side of his mouth, while he spat into a gutter with the other.

"Which un?" asked the helper, bringing the straw to the centre of his mouth, and neglecting the gutter for a moment.

"Why, the Tartur of the Hukraine breed, surnamed Moses."

"Boses," said the helper (who had had the bridge of his nose kicked in while examining the hocks of a vicious poster, in early youth)

“Boses, ah! he’s id a hudred ad didety fibe, he is.”

And, limping slowly up the yard, he vanished for a minute or two, while Mr. Tuesday took Newton’s measure, and then asked him, with an involuntary wink, which was only meant for himself, “How many he could take agin the field for the Metro.”

Newton was considering what he should say, when the ostler returned, leading a most shabby, broken-kneed equine.

“A very pretty Tartar he is, too,” said Newton, looking knowing.

“That’s a uncommon ’orse,” said Tuesday, looking *innocent*.

“Very likely. Take him back again, young man.”

“I thought you wanted somethin’ quiet,” said Tuesday.

“So I did; but I didn’t want ten shillings’ worth of sausage-meat all in one lot.”

“Oh!” said Tuesday, opening his mouth

on the word, and then shutting it again like a Swiss nut-cracker. "Then I suppose you won't care to see Aaron."

"Not if he's at all like his brother."

"Bring out Villiam Tell."

"Very odd names you give your horses," said Newton.

"Hodd names to suit hodd 'orses," said Tuesday. "Names 'em 'ording to their kivaulities. Villiam Tell's a 'igh-spirited 'oss."

"He won't do for me then, I'm afraid."

"Think not?"

"No," said Newton, pursing his lips and shaking his head. "Let's have something that's quiet, without being more dead than alive."

"I see," said Tuesday, "you wants somethin' that won't shy at the sight of a knacker's cart, eh?" and Mr. Tuesday playfully poked Newton in the ribs. "Ah! you're a knowin' one, you air, any one can see that."

“Vith arf ad eye,” murmured the helper.

“If all our customers vos like you,” continued Tuesday, “we shouldn’t be able to live. Bring out Bright. Calls him Bright ’cause he’s a showy ’oss, and a member o’ the Peace S’ciety. He is ordered, and ’adn’t ought to go out; but you shall have him as a special faviour, and we’ll put t’other gent off with summat else.”

Bright was led out; he suited Newton’s ideas; so, after a due amount of scrambling up, and having a hole taken up here, and a strap let out there, and doing a few juggling tricks with the reins, he rode slowly out.

“Whad dy’e thig o’ thad for a caper, Toosday?” quoth the helper.

“Think, Villiam? wot can any body think? ’cept that he was dro’rd vith the rolls at a quarter afore eight, and consekevently is werry unkimonly slack-baked. There’s a flat borned every hour, Villiam, and so much the

better for us ; but never mind ; if he gets Bright into a trot, he'll make his back ache for him, or I'm only a purveyor o' dog's meat ; and if he comes 'cross any horgins, or anythink, won't he astonish his weak nerves nuther."

And the worthy pair laughed in concert, while Newton rode slowly and safely towards Charing-cross, intending to ride down Piccadilly into the park ; but he changed his mind, and thought he would go through the Birdcage-walk. Opposite the Horse Guards, it struck him that that would be a shorter cut ; other horsemen and carriages were going through, so Newton turned Bright's head in that direction, resolving to follow them. A solitary horseman was before him, a carriage full of ladies (tremendous swells, whose attention, of course, he thought he had engaged) close behind him. The sentry on guard saluted the horseman in front, but directly Newton rode up for admission, brought

his carbine down smartly, holding it across just before Bright's nose.

"Can't pass," quoth the sentinel, with military brevity.

"Not pass?" said Newton.

"No."

"Why not?" asked Newton.

"Got a pass?" asked the soldier.

"No."

"Back," said the Spartan, pushing the carbine against Bright's nose, who, being as Mr. Tuesday affirmed a member of the peace business, was unused to the sight of offensive weapons, and backed rapidly and unpleasantly against the horses of the carriage behind, causing great confusion, and rather disconcerting Newton's seat on horseback.

The horseman in front, having heard some little discussion going on, turned round to see what was the matter, displaying the features of Captain Stevens.

"Ah, Mr. Dogvane! how d'ye do? What

is the matter? Can I be of any service?"

"Thank you," answered Newton, recovering his seat and his equanimity. "The man rather frightened my horse—that is all."

"Are you riding this way?" and Captain Stevens pointed through the archway.

"I am—that is, I was—but—"

"Oh! I see—a pass. Come along." And they rode slowly through, the sentry again saluting, to whom Newton graciously touched his hat, as he saw the Captain do, in token of his forgiveness.

"Shall we trot?"

And the Captain, talking of their friends at Crookham and other topics, put his horse into a trot, and Newton did the same. Assuredly there never was such a rough trotter as that Bright. All up the Mall he stamped and stamped his feet down as if he were pecking holes in the ground to plant them in—stomp, stomp, stomp—bump, bump, bump.

“Ned fre-e-e-quently drops i-i-in, and we ha-a-ave a set too-o-o.”

Thus the words were jerked out of Newton in his efforts at conversation.

“That’s rather a rough trotter of yours, I should say,” said Captain Stevens, glancing at Bright askance.

“Oh, con-foun-ded-de-dedly!” How his back and shoulders, head and arms, began to ache! Shake, shake, shake—bump, bump, bump. It was intolerable.

At length the Captain pulled up, and they rode slowly up Grosvenor-place. The walking pace suited Bright, and Newton, too, much better, and Newton straightened himself and tried to appear very much at his ease. Captain Stevens gave him an invitation to come down to the mess at Hounslow, to which station the Captain had just been sent, and Newton accepted it, feeling that he was getting into a very desirable circle of acquaintance through his old schoolfellow! So he rode

along upon very good—in fact, on improving—terms with himself. When they came to the corner, the Captain had business at Tattersall's, so they left their horses and strolled in. Here Newton was introduced to two or three of the Captain's friends, and tried to appear a judge of horseflesh; but he did not venture beyond shakes of the head, pursings of the lips, and an occasional "hum" or a "ha," which, added to that most sapient and all-penetrating frown, which most people who don't know anything of a horse, and some who do, consider it necessary to put on while looking at one, gave him, in his own eyes at any rate, the appearance of knowing a thing or two.

This little matter over, they betook themselves to their horses again, and rode down Piccadilly through St. James's Street. Captain Stevens "would look in at the club if Mr. Dogvane would take a glass of sherry and a biscuit with him"—an invitation which Newton accepted; and leaving their horses to

be walked up and down by a lad who was looking out for such jobs, they entered, and Newton lunched and became known to more swells. At length he took his leave, and Captain Stevens sat down to write a letter. For a few minutes the Captain sat over the paper, apparently in a brown study, when a roar of laughter from two or three officers with whom they had been chatting, and who were looking out of the window, attracted his attention.

“Hernandez, bai Jove!”

“Well done!”

“Ha! ha! ha!”

“Why, Stevens, your friend is the most perfect thing out since Hernandez.”

“What is the matter? What the deuce are you laughing at?” and he hastened to the window and soon joined in the laughter. Alas, poor Newton! Just as he set foot in stirrup, a German band ranged itself beside the pavement, and no sooner was he in the

saddle than they struck up a well-known and popular polka. Instantly Bright pricked up his ears, and, after a preliminary caper or two, he cleared a space for himself amongst the spectators, and commenced going round in a ring in the regular up and down circus canter. Bright *had* belonged to a circus, and round and round in one unbroken ring went the well-trained Bright. Newton pulled and toiled. It was useless. Bright's mouth was iron. Newton glanced up at "The Rag" windows and there—*horribile dictu!*—were the men, whom he had been recently introduced to, laughing—roaring at him, and even Captain Stevens's well-known features in the full swing of uproarious mirth. Poor Newton! what wouldn't he have given if the common sewer even would have opened beneath him to hide him! Suddenly there came a change in the tune, and as suddenly Bright turned short round and commenced cantering in the opposite direction; but this rapid change was

too much for Newton's "noble horsemanship," and he shot off at a tangent, and found himself sitting on his antipodes in the street, in the very centre of the crowd. Bright, upon losing his rider, as was his wont, stopped directly and stood still. Screams of laughter from "The Rag;" roars from the crowd, "Go it, old feller!" "Brayvo!" "Hooroar!" "Don't ye know him, Bill? He's the wild Hingun 'unter at Hashley's!" "My eyes, wot a lark!"

"I hope you're not hurt," said the good-natured Captain, who had hurried out at the moment of the accident, and was now helping him to rise.

"I think not," said Newton, rising slowly, and dealing tenderly with a soreness, partly occasioned by the rough trotting of Bright, and partly by the late violent visitation.

"Come in, then, and let's get you brushed—Go away, you scoundrels," (to the band), "don't make that hideous row here. Come

in, come in," and he led Newton once more to the steps.

"Here, you," said Newton to the red-jacketed errand lad; "lead that devil incarnate back to Bobtail's yard, and tell his man Friday, or Tuesday, or whatever his d——d name is, that Bright's a bigger beast, if possible, than he is himself. Tell him *where* and how he displayed his invaluable qualities, and, as for paying for him, tell him I'll see him somethinged and somethinged else first. Here, take my card to him, and be off."

What a fine thing a tone of command is! The man touched his hat, and, taking Bright by the rein, proceeded to lead him away; but Bright displayed considerable aversion to the red jacket, which, possibly, was somehow connected in his mind with war prices, dear oats, and short hay. A good deal of coaxing and persuasion was utterly useless; a little gentle force only brought into play *all* his obstinate attributes, and he jibbed almost into

the kitchen windows. At length, the youth brought the argument to a summary conclusion, and giving Bright a tremendous punch on the nose, and following it up with a smart kick on the ribs, Bright became amenable to reason, and with only a slight snort, or occasional inclination to jib— instantly subdued at the sight of the fist— he submitted to be led away, while Newton once more sought the friendly shelter of “The Rag.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE NOBLE ART OF SELF-DEFENCE.

NEWTON had carried his determination of studying carefully the noble art of self-defence into practice, and commenced his course of tuition under a gentleman of the Fancy known to the public as the Borough Badger. Gentlemen of this calling have appeared so often, in such a variety of histories and sketches, that it is unnecessary to enter into a description of him. Not that we feel unequal to the task; for the pock-marked, low-browed, high-checked Badger, with his Brighton crop and tight trowsers, will recur to us; and we might recount, in the descrip-

tive and appropriate language of *The Life*, how the Badger laid the foundation of his fistic fame by vanquishing Short's Novice in 53 rounds, after 1 hour and 45 minutes' contest; how he then threw a summerset, and presented his opponent with a grain of mint sauce towards a subscription for salve to his sores; how he was next matched for fifty a side against Caggy Boots, when, after a contest of 94 minutes and 42 rounds, Caggy having put up the shutters (*i.e.* been beaten blind), and having lost the use of his dexter flipper (right hand), in the early stage of the contest, threw up the sponge in token of defeat; and how, after being on the shelf some time, upon looking out for a customer, he encountered the renowned Joey the Flamingo, by whom he was vanquished after a plucky struggle of two hours' duration, &c., &c.

All this, and much more, might we relate, but it is little to the purpose. Suffice it to

say that the Badger was one of the old school—a rough-and-ready customer; very good-tempered, very independent and honest; slow in taking offence, but an awkward customer when he did take it—a very bulldog, sturdy fellow, was the Badger. He never imposed upon others, and would not allow any gentleman to be imposed on when in his company; and the Badger's "Stow it!" when anything of the kind was attempted, was generally sufficient for all parties.

One rather characteristic anecdote we must relate of him. Always ready to take the side of the weaker party, he once at a theatre pitched a scoundrel, who was annoying a little lame girl in front of him, over into the pit in his wrath. To be sure the gallery was not very lofty, any more than the character of the theatre; but the man broke his arm in his fall, and the Badger was most kind and attentive to him during his illness, and allowed him a large share of his own hardly-earned

income until he was well and strong again.

Consequently the Badger, owing to his honesty and sturdiness, had many admirers and pupils, and the Fancy respected him in general, though it liked him not, because it was a difficult, indeed a hopeless, matter to arrange *a cross* with him. The only one he ever entered into proved a sell for the parties who arranged it. It was agreed that the Badger was to lose a certain fight, and was to have a handsome sum for doing so; but he did not know how to lose, accordingly "he licked the winner as wos to be," as he used to express it when he was telling the story, "in 22 minutes and a 'arf." Such was the gentleman, who, for a moderate remuneration knocked our friend Newton about twice or three times a-week, teaching him at the same time to do the same kind office for others.

"Now, sir, let it go. Don't 'it as if you

was afeared to 'it; but 'it out from yer shoulder, sir. Now jest 'it out straight at Muster Spooner." The Badger had a private pique against Spooner, and he would point to a villainously daubed face, supposed to represent that individual, which was tacked on to a sack of sawdust, suspended by a rope from a beam in the ceiling, at which the Badger was wont to exercise his extensors, when he had nothing better to exercise them on. "That's vun for his nob," the Badger would say, as Newton dexterously hit Spooner a severe blow on the nose, and sent the sack spinning round for a minute or two. "Now do that agen, sir. right straight at me."

Newton would essay, and of course fail, experiencing a sharp jar from the fore-arm to the shoulder, from the Badger's guard.

"Now, then, ye see the heasy hattitood's best, so as you can step forrard or backard easiest. No straddlin' about like that there; it won't do. If you leans too much on yer

right pin you're 'arf as easy agen to knock down; and if you leans too much on yer left your 'ead's too near to my fives for yer 'ands to take care on it. Trust to yer 'ands and yer pins to take care o' yer 'ead. Free and heasy with 'ands and pins; anythink awkard and cramped aint science, and what aint science aint no use. Don't bring yer 'ead so far forrard; keep it a little backarder, or you'll be stoppin' all my blows with it, which looks werry pretty, but aint no ways effective. There! I knowed you would. Why didn't you counter? Now agen. Look out. That's better, and was pretty sharp too. You'll do in time; but you don't take care enough o' the mark;" and, receiving a smart blow on the epigastrium, Newton would fly up against the wall, and stand there panting. But his pluck was good, and he would come to it again and again, and, consequently, he made good progress; so that in a month he began occasionally to give the Badger as good as he sent,

and the Badger owned that, "for a hamatoor, it worn't so heasy to fiddle him."

Occasionally his friend Ned, who was in town on some business connected with his commission, met him there, and they had an amicable set-to; during which the Badger would inhale tobacco, and smoke or nod approval or dissent. But more often Newton and his friend strolled in at Parade's, and would do a little pistol-shooting, or have a bout with broad swords, single-sticks, or foils. Here they would find a good-humoured life-guardsmen or two, always ready to instruct in feats of dexterity, with any weapon under the sun. Old Parade (a tall, thin, lathy Frenchman), and his sallow assistant, Alphonse (rich in crinirial honours), a stray Hungarian, or a Pole or two, a few Italians and Germans, who went to chat over the news, to see those foreign journals with the unpronounceable names, and "ze Anglish *Times*," which one would translate rapidly for the benefit of the

others, amidst “*Cré noms, ’spettos, Teufels,*” and exasperations in all sorts of tongues.

There was amongst this motley assembly one person who had often taken the fancy of our friends, and who was a regular attendant. He was an inimitable pistol shot, and would sometimes mark his initial, V. S., upon the target, placing bullet after bullet exactly in the right place, until the letters were complete, each bullet touching the other and forming the lines; and, as a fencer, neither Parade nor the agile Alphonse could beat him at any point. He was very silent, seldom talking much, and seemed little known, though he would stand and listen when one of the party read out such portions of the *Times* as seemed to interest him, bestowing no other comment than a longer or a shorter puff from his short black-pipe, which a Scotch laddie even might almost have envied for its shortness; albeit they generally smoke their to-

bacco closer to their noses than any race of people we ever saw yet.

He was of middle height, and apparently of slight frame, but there was a remarkably active, wiry look about him; his shoulders were broader than they looked; and, when he stripped his right arm for the assault, though certainly not showing a superfluity of muscle, it was as hard as nails, and the sinews stood out like whip-cord. Very dark-complexioned, with a long, heavy moustache and beard, but little whisker, and his hair cut very short indeed, with a quick, grey, restless eye, and over-hanging eyebrow, he had a daring, lawless air, which gave him the appearance of being, as it is commonly said, "up to anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter."

Our friends used, jokingly between themselves, to call him "the Bravo;" and a very bravoish look he bore.

One day Edward was fencing with a young Barrister, with whom he had a slight ac-

quaintance. Newton, who frequently looked in at that hour, had not yet arrived. The Bravo, as we will call him till we know his name, was smoking his dhudeen, as usual, and nursing his right knee, while he sometimes listened to the news, and sometimes looked on at Edward and his friend.

“A hit?” said Edward, slightly touching his opponent.

“Oh dear, no,” answered the young man decidedly, who, like most fencers, had a huge objection to acknowledging a hit, and, beyond all that, was blessed with a greater share of conceit than usual.

“There, then,” said Ned, disengaging, feinting, and thrusting in carte over the arm.

“No; certainly not, I assure you,” replied his opponent, bunglingly putting the adverse blade aside.

“H’m!” said Ned; and a fresh series of parries, thrusts, &c. were gone through, during

which Ned claimed another touch, which was still denied; and then, being winded, sat down beside the Bravo, who had been looking on at the last set-to with some interest.

“Your opponent doesn’t allow your hits?” said that gentleman, inquiringly.

Ned looked up rather surprised. He had never interchanged a word with him before, and, indeed, seldom heard the sound of his voice, which, by the way, was low, full, and musical to a degree.

“No,” answered Ned, with a laugh; “he hates to be hit, and still more, to allow it;” and he looked at his friend, who was drinking beer, and had his back turned towards them.

“Why don’t you thrust home, and then drop your hand and forearm so?” continued the Bravo, as he suited the action to the word.

Ned did not exactly see the object of the advice, but he gave a short nod and determined to act upon it; and, his opponent being

ready, they commenced again. Presently, Ned hit him full and fair, and, keeping the foil fixed, he suddenly repeated the action the Bravo had used, and the blade was literally shivered against his friend's breast; and Ned, not being thoroughly up to the dodge, and pressing somewhat too heavily, narrowly escaped running him through with the part that remained in his hand.

“There could be no mistake about that,” said Ned; and the Bravo got up, saying:—

“A hit, a hit, a very palpable hit,” and, taking a pistol from Alphonse, was soon to be heard engaged in writing his initials on the target in the next room. Newton had come in at this moment, and was staring with astonishment at the narrow escape and the broken foil. Old Parade, too, had seen the whole thing from the distance, and came running up, calling to Alphonse:—

“Alphonse, scélerat, another blade for M'sieu Bower—Diable! dat vos Signor

Sartoris"—to Ned; "I see de counsel he was gif you de loin. He shall have stab some von in my salon presently, and I will be ruiné—Ah! not dat blade. Bah! Cré nom! Alphonse! stupide!" and a volley of Gallic expletives went at Alphonse.

"What's his name?" said Ned.

"Sartoris, M'sieu."

"Why, what countryman is he?" He's a deuced clever fencer; but, upon my soul, Baylis was very near getting his gruel."

"I vos not know vot his countrymans vas. He spik French and Italian comme un natif—Allemand et Espagnol all alike. Hongrise he spik lectle and Eastern tongues moche. He is superb wis de small sword—more quicker que l'éclair. Wis de pistolet—ah! magnifique. La première fois he vas com here," continued the chatty Parade, with appropriate and striking gesture, "il a marqué son nom—write his signat sur la targe, pour une

gageure—a leetle bet. He make von leetle bet—de deux tasses de café, et des cigarres, et le prix de l'ammunition, wis my compatriote Pavillon, maître d'armes de chasseurs sous l'Empire, et moi-myself. Ze spectateurs conceive him vanteur—vat is it? boast—brag? Dey lay ten, twenty, quarante, septi franc on de issue. Bot he say, 'Merci, messieurs, non. I shall not vish to vin your monnaies; mais, attendez.' And he shoot, shoot a big V complet; next un I parfait; N C. De shoot vas grand; den E and N beautiful! but I tink I préfère it not at my charge—expense. I vas strike de vager, as you say, and pay ze café and cigarre, and vat vas maintenant shooted. Et Pavillon, who say it was magnifique et superb, too, vas satisfait, parfaitement, likewise, and would not trouble to continue de gentilhomme, and we pay huit douzaines et cinq—von hondre and von charges of de pistolet. Ah! ha! C'est un brigand terrible, mais un gentilhomme parfait;"

and Parade, with a bow and a flourish, stepped off in another direction.

“What did he say?” asked Newton, whose knowledge of French had been confined totally to his school days, and who had only half heard the last sentence.

“Why,” answered Ned, tossing up and catching by the handle his new foil, and then punching imaginary holes in the floor, and nodding to his late antagonist, who had dressed meantime, and was gradually working his way to the door, carelessly and slowly, as if he didn’t wish to appear chagrined at his palpable defeat. “Why, he says something very like what I heard a waterman once say of Lord D——, ‘I likes him, sir, ’acos he is *sich* a gentleman, and can be *sech* a blackguard.’”

“Not a very unusual qualification, if we take the words in their everyday signification,” quoth Newton. “And how do you make his name out? V-i-n-c-e-n, that can’t be anything but Vincent, or Vincentio. Don Vincentio Abra-

cadabara. Good name that for a bravo—‘Unbrigand terrible,’” mimicking Parade’s air. At this moment Newton saw his friend suddenly change colour violently, and, turning round, beheld the subject of their conversation close behind him, where he must have heard the whole of the last sentence or two.

“Nothing of the sort,” said that individual, with a pleasant smile at the perplexity upon the countenances of the friends. “Nothing of the sort—Vincent Sartoris, of any part of this world he happens to reside in, and heaven knows where in the next, at your service. Pray, don’t feel annoyed or uncomfortable—your conversation was not meant for my ear. Even if it had been, I should not care, as I am perfectly accustomed to all sorts of practical curiosity, and therefore a little harmless theoretical is not likely to disturb my equanimity. Pray, do me the favour to try a pass or two. Your guard is somewhat cramped; so there, a little more freedom, yet

perfect firmness. Nothing but long practice will give you that. Feel your adversary's blade, but don't bear *too* heavily upon it, unless you are about to disengage, because if he disengages unexpectedly whilst you bear on his blade, you force your own blade out of the true line of defence; but if you are about to disengage, it may not be a bad plan momentarily, because the pressure he must keep up naturally forces his out when you do disengage; otherwise a light and easy play of the wrist is advisable. Ha, ha! I've a great mind to break one of old Parade's pets, to pay the old scoundrel out. I dare say he has been maligning me shamefully. A hit? yes—another—a little higher. That's better. Did he tell you how I rooked Pavillon and himself out of von hondre and von charges of de pistolet? Capital—that's better. A hit—another, lighter, quicker—so."

And thus the new and strange acquaintance ran on, fencing perfectly, and with the

utmost ease ; pinking Ned all over, just when and where he pleased.

“The Captain wouldn’t stand a chance with him,” said Ned to Newton, as they walked to the lavatory. “He’d be a baby in his hands ; and he’s almost, if not quite, a match for Parade ; and as for Alphonse, why he’s nowhere.”

Finally, they all three sat down, and got into a conversation about various arms and weapons.

“Good steel, that,” said Ned, flourishing a light cavalry sabre, and bending it against the floor.

“That,” said Sartoris, whom we shall now call by his name. “That, steel ! If you call that steel, I wonder what you would call my conventicle ?”

“Your what ?” asked Newton.

“Conventicle. I’ve got a real old Damascus scimitar, and I call it my conventicle, because its eloquence is of the most convincing

kind, and anything but prosy. I got it from a Turcoman sheik, who presented it to me for saving the life of a very valuable mare he possessed. A strong arm and dexterous would almost slice that thing in two with it. I can cut a suspended candle in halves with it, which, if it seem simple to you, you can try. And I could also cut seven or eight oranges in halves, placed one behind the other, without driving one off the table."

"I thought there was a good deal of myth about those Damascus blades," said Newton.

"A myth I should like to see cultivated now-a-days ; but we've lost the art, sir. Everything now is sacrificed to cheapness. The same old fellow had one of those ancient daggers which they prize so much ; and in a firm, true hand, few coats of mail would be proof against it. I've seen him drive it through two copper coins, each of them nearly as thick as a penny, with ease. But it

was a great heir-loom, and belonged to the tribe."

"By Jove! I should like to see that scimitar," said Ned, "and to see you cut a candle in two. I can easily fancy it requires a good deal of dexterity."

"Should you?" said Sartoris. "Then, if you like"—and here he hesitated, and his bronzed face assumed a deeper tint of red, but he shook it off directly. "Pshaw! why should a man be ashamed of his abiding place? I've had many, many a worse shelter in forest and jungle, in savannah, prairie, or sandy desert. Ay, many and many a night, when drenched to the skin in a tropical storm, would I have given something handsome for the friendly shelter of my now despised attic. Comforts are, after all, but comparative in their value, and it would be a palace to an Esquimaux or a Hottentot; so if you don't mind clambering up six pair of stairs in the very doubtful neighbourhood of Tottenham-

court Road I can offer you a chillum of Shiraz, or, if you prefer it, as I confess I do, a cutty and a block of Cavendish to cut from—real honey dew. I can't offer you much else ; but you shall gladden your eyes, if you at all care about it, with a sight of the conventicle and one or two other curious specimens of arms."

Our friends, professing themselves delighted with the prospect, accepted the invitation for the next day with pleasure. The Bravo wrote a word or two on a card, gave it to Ned, and, slightly bowing, bade them good day and retired.

"By the way, Ned," asked Newton, as they walked into the street, "who was that lady you were riding in the park with yesterday?"

Ned did not appear to hear the question, and Newton repeated it.

"Oh! nobody you know," answered Ned ; and then, as if an afterthought struck him, he asked, "What did you think of her?"

“Well, I certainly thought she was very handsome.”

“She is—lovely;” and Ned again dropped the conversation.

“Where did you become acquainted?” asked Newton, perseveringly; but Ned was again dumb.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIFE AMONGST THE CHIMNEY-POTS.

LITTLE TOOTLE STREET, Tottenham-court Road, is not an aristocratic neighbourhood ; it is a collection of lodging-houses, whence, at all hours of the day and night, issue professional people and professionals. There is a considerable difference between the two ; though a foreigner would perhaps be puzzled to understand it. The lodging-houses of Little Tootle Street contain lodgers of higher and lower pretensions. The higher they abide the lower their pretensions, and *vice versâ*, by a species of inverse ratio. The parlours engrave Bedford Square on their cards, from their

proximity to that locality. The upper floors, for the most part eschewing cards, and unwilling to mislead their friends who may come to seek them, are content to head their correspondence with Tottenham-court Road ; while few people know who the upper floors and attics are at all, where they live, or how, or indeed anything about them. They go in and out humbly—nobody troubles their heads about them ; and even the regular lodging-house maid-of-all-work (who by the way is invariably either Irish, Scotch, or Welsh, and never English, and who lives apparently in the coal-cellar—heaven, her missus, and herself only know how) is the only person who knows their names, and that is, generally speaking, all *she* does know about them ; for they *do* for themselves in the very fullest lodging-house sense of the word.

Pianos rumble everlastingly in Little Tootle Street, and huge wind instruments appear to gape with astonishment at the

noise they make, as they pump forth the woes of Little Tootle Street and its occupants ; while violins, *et hoc genus*, wail complainingly at all hours the most dismal “Carnavals de Venice” that Venice herself could by any possible means experience under the most depressing of circumstances.

Having run the gauntlet of a complete *orchestre monstre*, our two friends stood opposite No. 19, Little Tootle Street, at about four of the clock on the afternoon after the invitation we have seen given in our last chapter.

“Let me see,” said Edward, referring to the paste-board, “19, Little Tootle Street—corner house, is it? What a cramped hand! Ay, sure enough, this must be it.”

“Shall I knock?” asked Newton, immediately suiting the action to the word, and not waiting for an answer. Some minutes passed, and they rapped again, and after some little pause the door was opened

by a ferret-eyed Scotch wench, who was vainly endeavouring to bolt some half-masticated food, and violently choking in the attempt.

“Is Mr. Sartoris at home?” asked Newton, with vast politeness.

The Scotch maid opened her eyes so wide, that it was evident to our friends that Sartoris was not often troubled with visitors. At length, having swallowed the obstinate morsel, she shut the door, and proceeded to the stairs, saying:—

“Ou ay, gang till the tap;” and having condescended to say this much, she vanished to regions below, in apparent disgust at having put herself out of the way to answer the door for “the attic.”

Our friends being left to themselves, having nothing else for it, commenced the ascent, up, up, up, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 flights of stairs; and yet another.

“Heavens and earth!” said Newton, pant-

ing; "Albert Smith's Mont Blanc is a fool to this."

They stood opposite a supernaturally narrow and dirty flight of broken steps.

"Come along, old boy," said Ned, and with one more effort they stood at the top.

There was no landing-place, nothing but a low black door before them. At this they knocked; it opened, and they entered.

"Well, you see, we have scaled your fortress," quoth Ned.

"I am glad to see you in my lofty habitation. Pray, make yourselves at home, and comfortable as you can," was the reply.

We must describe Vincent Sartoris's attic. It contained a bed, a chair, a small three-legged table, a wash-hand basin, jug, and a glass; and that was all it did contain, by way of furniture. The window, which was open, looked out upon the leads, which were bounded in front, some three feet from the window, by a low parapet wall, beyond which

vast stacks of chimneys, church spires, and other lofty buildings might be seen. Over the remarkably small grate was fixed a temporary but capacious mantel-shelf, greatly out of proportion to the grate, and innocent of paint. This was an article of luxury of Vincent's own construction. It was covered with a multitude of things, and over it hung a crooked Turkish scimeter, which Newton surmised rightly was the famed conventicle. Two or three swords of different shapes, a six-shot revolver, and a crooked Moorish dagger; an Arkansas tooth-pick, or bowie knife; an ancient spear-head; and a single modern duelling-pistol, whose fellow reposed in a baize-lined mahogany-case, which was lying open on the bed. Three or four skins of wild beasts formed the coverlet of the bed; and the head of a panther grinned jovially at them, with a pipe stuck in his mouth and a Turkish fez on his head. From over the mantel-shelf other trophies of Mr. Sartoris's

skill in destroying the savage monsters of the desert and forest were scattered about the room, and gave it a most picturesque appearance.

Mr. Sartoris—or, as we are getting familiar with him, let us call him Vincent—was smoking the invariable short pipe when our friends entered, and did the duties of hospitality with as much politeness and grace as if his attic were a palace. It seems odd, perhaps, to say so, and you might laugh at the idea of a man doing the honours in an attic; but Vincent was not a man to be laughed at; everything he did was perfectly easy, natural, and gentlemanlike; and it no more seemed odd to him to be hospitable and pleasant and jovial, and all that in an attic in Tottenham-court Road, than it would in a tent in the desert, an Indian wigwam, or even a grand establishment in Bedford Square, or, for the matter of that, even in Tyburnia or Belgravia.

“ Ben, get off that box, and let the gentleman have it, and fetch me that skin ;” and Ben, who was a dog, and a nondescript dog, bred between a Newfoundland and a bull, got gravely down from the box upon which he had been reposing, and dragged the indicated skin—a beautiful black bear-skin—towards his master. Vincent threw it over the box Ben had vacated, and offered it as a seat for Newton. Ned was favoured with the chair, whilst Vincent sat on the foot of the bed.

“ You smoke, I know,” said their host. “ Which shall I offer you—Shiraz, bird’s-eye, or Cavendish? They are all here ;” and he lifted down a small box from a shelf in a recess at the side of the fire-place. Ned preferred bird’s-eye, and he chose it now. Newton had never tasted Shiraz; so he indulged in a long Jasmin tube and large bowl of a very mild and pleasant substance which gave him, as it does most novices,

a faint idea of a freshly-erected hay-rick with a bran new tarpaulin over it—and not such a very unpleasant idea either.

“Now what will you do in the drinking way? Are you coffee drinkers? I can make it in a minute by yon invention of my own,” pointing to a small cylinder which in the distance looked like a tin quart pot. “I ought to make a fortune by that thing. Simplest thing in the world; boils and broils at the same time, and all for the small charge of one farthing. A penn’orth of my stuff will cook four meals; and those things could be made and sold at a shilling a-piece, and pay me 50 per cent. then.

“But why don’t you bring it out?” asked Ned.

“Bring it out! Pooh! none but fools in my circumstances bring things out now! Wise men, rich men, and men of the world, lie in wait and steal ’em when they are brought out. The fools do kick now and

then, and do go to law with them; the wise men go to law too. Their purses are the longest; the fools sometimes die ruined and broken-hearted, and the wise men make fortunes out of them. Ah! it's true enough, patent law, like all other law in England, is quite a question of money. I brought a thing out once. I never had but 2000*l.* for a capital; indeed, it was all I had. It was a very great public benefit, my invention, and it was pirated of course. I went to law and won my cause; it was moved to another court, and then another, and then back again. I sunk 1700 of my 2000 in the job; and then, seeing I had no chance, pulled in. The pirate has a villa at Richmond, a house at Brighton, and another in yon square, which he made out of my brains; and I have travelled for a living since, and written travels, &c., for twopenny papers." At this moment a low bark came from Ben, who had walked out through the window on to the

leads. "There is the boy for copy, which I had just finished when you entered—I beg your pardon, will either of you prefer beer to coffee?"

"I think I should," said Newton, who was not a coffee drinker, "only the trouble of fetching it;" and Newton thought of the flights of stairs.

"Oh, pray don't let your ideas wander in that direction. We do without the Alps, as I call the six flights of stairs you had to mount, in all those little matters. Indeed, I may say I have Napoleonised them. If you would see how I manage, follow me;"—and taking the paper which he had referred to off the table, Vincent stepped upon a box, and so through the open window, and our friends followed him.

No. 19 was a corner house in the street, the front of which was opposite the attic windows; the other side of the house, which formed one of the sides of the angle, went

sheer down into a blind court, and on this side it was all dead wall—no windows. On the angle of the wall sat Ben, who was looking assiduously down into the court, and wagging his tail slowly in token of some sort of recognition. Projecting slightly over the wall was a small temporary windlass, or crane, with a stout cord wound on it, to which was attached a small basket which lay upon the leads.

Looking over into the street, they saw a boy waiting, in evident expectation of something from above; he did not wait long, for, placing the papers in the basket, with a sixpence, Vincent launched it over the parapet, and, setting the windlass in motion, allowed it slowly to descend into the street. As he did so he gave a shrill whistle, and from a public-house which formed the opposite angle of the court, on the other side of the way, emerged a potboy, who, looking up to the parapet, received a telegraphic communication,

and re-entering the house, returned speedily with a foaming pot of half-and-half. By this time the basket had reached its destination; the lad took out his papers, and, nodding, vanished round the corner in the midst of a shrilly-whistled bar of "Partant pour la Syrie."

The potboy placed the pot carefully in the basket, took out the sixpence, and retired; the basket was wound up and returned to its place.

"What a capital contrivance!" quoth Newton.

"Yes," said Vincent, "saves no end of legs. There are some advantages in living in an attic, which the lower regions don't enjoy. There's a stronger cord and a larger basket, which I clap on for heavy goods, as coals, &c. &c.; and in case of fire, you see, it serves for a fire-escape; or I can get to the other end of the street in five minutes—another advantage in London"—and Vincent pointed to the range

of parapet, which, with a low party-wall between each house, ran the whole length of the street. "The only thing I miss is my garden. I always had a garden in Paris, but the smoke kills everything here, so one cucumber-frame is all I can manage;" and, turning into a slight recess, he pointed to a small cucumber-frame, now tenanted only by a few withering and yellow leaves. "I have a weakness," he continued, "for cutting my own cucumbers in the season; besides, it amuses me to cultivate something; and a man must have something to take an interest in."

"But how on earth did you manage?"

"Oh, the windlass does wonders; got it all up that way; and an acquaintance of mine—travelling market-gardener—donkey-cart man—did the rest. You should have seen my beans, and peas, and lettuces, and even flowers,—in Paris, though. Yonder's my target,"—and he pointed across the street to a wide stack of chimneys, whereon was affixed a

round iron plate, showing marks of Vincent's handiwork.

“ But isn't it dangerous ? ” asked Newton.

“ Dangerous ! How ? I never miss my aim ; and when the target is black all over, my friend opposite—a medical student, not a bad fellow either—re-whitens it for me ; that's about once a week, for pistol shooting, to excel in it, requires constant practice. There's one spot of white left there now ; ” and stepping into the room, he took down the pistol they had noticed from its hook, raised it carefully in the direction of the target, fired, and the spot of white, which was near the outer rim of the target, vanished. Having accomplished this, he carefully wiped the lock of the pistol, cleaned the barrel out with a piece of oiled rag, and returned the pistol to its place.

“ Did you ever use that pistol for other than peace ? That is, for— ” and Newton hesitated.

“At a human, do you mean?” said Sartoris, coolly. “Oh, yes; and the other one too. Let me see, it was this pistol—no—yes, this was the pistol I shot Heinkerstrom with at Hougoumont. I know it by the mark on the stock; that’s where his bullet glanced from, grazed my knuckle, and ripped up my sleeve, just lifting the skin and baring the muscle. Lucky for me, my pistol covered my head.”

“And did you kill him?”

“As dead as a stone. I went there on purpose.”

“Went there on purpose!” said Ned, with something like a thrill of horror.

“Ay, indeed, I did. It was a matter of revenge and expiation, perfectly justifiable. Possibly you don’t hold with these notions, or even with duelling at all; I know most people don’t—they call it savage, murder, and all that; no doubt it is in some instances, but no system is perfect. In the matter of this very defunct scoundrel, the cause of my

seeking him at all was one of these very cases. And there are many cases which may occur in the course of life which no law—however, I won't enter into an argument in favour of duelling. I daresay I should not make a convert of you, although I had the best of the argument. You see this blackguard—but I must begin at the beginning—Charley Sacheverel was an old schoolfellow of mine; my earliest—in fact, my only friend. I had often protected him at school, and prevented his being bullied; and Charley, in return, loved me like a brother. Poor lad! I'm sure I loved him too. They called us Pylades and Orestes at school. Charley was, like myself, without a near relation in the world; though he had plenty of money, with guardians and all that. At last Charley came of age. He had fallen in love with a very pretty girl a short time before, and wanted to marry her off hand; but her friends thought her young, and Charley young, too, so they advised him

to see a little more of the world first—take a tour, and so forth. Charley didn't want to go abroad; he was rather domestic, stay-at-home—very innocent, harmless, and quiet, though there was a bit of the devil in him too, when he was put out. But the friends advised the girl to wait for a twelvemonth, and she consented; so, as there was nothing else for it, Charley set out on his tour. We needn't enter into where he went, or what he did; it is sufficient to say that within about a month of his intended return he found himself at Ems, where he fell in with this scoundrel, Von Heinkerstrom. I should think Charley hardly ever touched a card or a dice in his life; but Heinkerstrom and one or two others got hold of him, and by degrees infected him. To shorten the story, they kept him there long past the time when he was expected home to be married, and in the end entirely ruined him. A quarrel sprung up, and Heinkerstrom, who was a noted swordsman and

pistol shot, had his victim out, who scarcely knew one end of a pistol from another, and as he brutally said, 'having paid well for his life, he sold it to him;' but he shot him in the thigh and smashed the bone, so that he was obliged to lose his leg. Poor lad! I shall never forget that pale, pinched face, the last time I had seen it so ruddy and joyous with health, as he hobbled on crutches. Having lost a quarter of himself, and nearly all his fortune, the lady excused herself from having anything further to do with him, or even from seeing him; alleging his late neglect of her as the reason, and pretending to think he had completely thrown her over. Poor fellow! He was quite prepared to relinquish his engagement, though he did not expect the blow to come from her. It was cruel, abominable. Six weeks after, she married young Hagley, of the Stock Exchange; and in another twelvemonth ran off to Brussels with a scamp, who, of course,

threw her off when he grew tired of her. She got rather notorious at Rome, where I often saw her. She was very pretty. I don't know where she is now; I have not heard of her for some time. Since that moment I have forsworn woman."

Vincent paused; he had been speaking in a low, subdued voice; he pulled out his handkerchief and blew his nose violently, re-filled his pipe in silence, and played with Ben's ears, who had in dog-like sympathy thrust his muzzle into his master's hand, and placed one of his huge ungainly paws on his knee. Bending over the dog for some seconds, Vincent sent forth dense puffs of smoke, and hid his face behind the cloud; while Newton and Ned looked on at this strong evidence of feeling with interest and expectation.

"It seems strange that I should speak of all this to you," said Vincent, at length, raising his head and clearing his voice, which

was husky—"you, who are comparative strangers to me, and of whom I know so little. But something—something wh—," and he hesitated—"seems to impel me to do it; and the first time I saw you"—turning to Ned, "I was struck by a strong resemblance in feature between you and my poor Charley. So very strong! Could you have been in any way related?" And he looked earnestly and fixedly at Ned, as if a great deal depended on his reply.

"I should think not," said Ned; "I don't know of our having any relations of that name."

"It may be but a chance resemblance," continued Vincent, with a heavy sigh; "I had a double myself at Brussels, who belonged to the king's body-guard, or something of that sort, I believe, and many a strange *contretemps* happened in consequence. But you may as well lunch with me, for I am hungry—and, when I can, usually eat when I am so—

though my fare is neither varied nor dainty ; and I will continue the story while I get the things out.

And, taking their silence for consent, he turned to a cupboard and took forth a plate or two, &c., a knuckle of ham in fair condition, a box of sardines, and the remains of a barrel of oysters, which he commenced opening with much adroitness, continuing his story between whiles ; to the remainder of which we must devote another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DUEL WITH A VENGEANCE.

WHILE he prepared the necessaries for the lunch, Vincent thus continued his story :—

“The news finished him, acting upon his shattered health. He turned his face to the wall, and in less than a week it was all over. Having paid the first of my last duties to my—ah—friend,” and he again hesitated strangely, “I began to think about my second—vengeance. I have said Von Heinkerstrom was an admirable swordsman and pistol shot. I was an admirable swordsman too. From a child I had evinced a strong turn for it. My practice was constant. I had fenced in Paris,

in Madrid, in Vienna; and at twenty I had held my own against the best swordsmen in the world, and since then I had improved; but I was not *de première force* with the pistol, though tolerably good; and I felt sure that, though I could kill Heinkerstrom with the sword with ease, yet, if I challenged him, somehow my reputation with the weapon would get wind; and it was known that I was not equally good with the pistol; consequently pistols it would be. Either way it was as well to make it a certainty, and a little practice would not be unserviceable; so for eight months the pistol was hardly ever out of my hand, except at meal-time, and some four or five hours' sleep. I need not say with such perseverance I became tolerably successful; and when I considered myself good enough I started for Ems. I must tell you, however, that I found out from a Pole, whom I got acquainted with by accident, that Heinkerstrom, who was a notorious duellist, usually made the

head his mark, when he meant killing—I don't know why; he was more accustomed to it perhaps. Sometimes, as in the case of my friend, he maimed his opponents in the leg, but that was not often; he had a knack of getting very quickly on his opponent's head, after carefully measuring his height by the eye. I wormed this out of my friend, the Pole, in a little desultory conversation about duelling. He little thought the use I should make of it. He found out afterwards, though; for that Pole, who liked not Von Heinkerstrom, happened to be at Brussels at the time of the quarrel, and was my second—Stanislaus Lavitzky; he became a great friend of mine after I slew Heinkerstrom. I think he has turned Mahommedan, and is something in the Turkish service—a Pasha or something. Having learnt this, I thought it as well to turn my attention to it; and, practising opposite the glass pretty constantly, I managed to bring up my hand, wrist, and pistol, so as to cover the

greater part of my head. You may have noticed a peculiar way I have at times of holding a pistol. It's difficult to get at my head, you see;" and Vincent suited the action to the discourse, and certainly there was not much of his head visible. "All this is very cool and blood-thirsty, you will think; but I was going to fight a very cool and blood-thirsty scoundrel, who had killed my—ah—friend, in part actively, and partly by slow torture, and I did not think it worth while giving a chance away. It was well for me, as it turned out, that I did not. I started for Ems; he wasn't there; so I went on to Baden, and thence to Brussels; there I found him. I soon got introduced to Heinkerstrom. We became acquaintances; and I watched my opportunity. He was playing *écarté* one night with a Captain Stevens."

"Stevens!" said both our friends in a breath. "What, Stevens of the —th?"

"The same," answered Vincent. "Do you

know him? He is in town. I saw him a week since."

"Oh, very well indeed. There's a—" and Ned was about to say 'an engagement between him and one of my sisters;' but he checked himself, thinking it as well to be silent, and turned it off with "a scar on his left temple."

"Exactly. How singular! Why, we ought to be quite old acquaintances." And he smiled a faint smile. "However, they were playing *écarté*, and Stevens was losing, of course. Not much though, for he seldom touched cards or dice as a gambler, though he would for amusement now and then throw a piece on the tables, or enter into some small trial of skill, just to do as others did—though how he ever came to know or sit down with that ruffian, I can't conceive. He hadn't the same interest in becoming acquainted with him that I had. But people make acquaintances abroad much more freely and easily than they do here, and Heinkerstrom, though of shady reputation, passed for a

gentleman. The play went on. I was sure Heinkerstrom was cheating, somehow. It wasn't in his nature to play fair. At length I fancied I saw the scoundrel slip a card. No doubt I was right. I stopped the game at once, and distinctly informed the Captain he was being cheated. Everything was confusion and uproar in a moment. Lavitzky was by; he stood my friend, and he implored me to let him say it was a mistake—that I had been drinking—to retract, and to let the Captain fight his own battle. He was a good fellow, and didn't wish to see me put out of the world. Nothing but a meeting would satisfy either Heinkerstrom or myself. So it was arranged to come off at Hougoumont the next morning. We chose to go some way from town, so as to be quite secure from any interruption. As early as we could get out of the city the next morning, Lavitzky, a little medico from the Montagne de la Cour, whom—the medico, not the montagne—Lavitzky

insisted upon bringing for form's sake—not that he was likely to be of much use—Stevens, who begged to be allowed to be of the party, as he was mixed up in the quarrel, and myself, passed through the porte, without interruption, in a Vigilant—my likeness to the man about Court standing me in good stead—and rolled along over the flat, uninteresting country. I forgot to say that, after some little difficulty, the question of weapons resolved itself into pistols, as I had foreseen. I had been out in two or three harmless affairs before—twice with the small-sword, when I scratched and disarmed my antagonist, and once with pistols, when I was touched on the shoulder; but they were trifling matters, though they served to assure me that my nerve was good. This, however, was a very different affair, and I knew that one or the other would not leave the ground alive, and I hoped it would not be my fortune to remain.

“ But although I felt perfectly easy as to

the result, I was 'distract,' and I turned a deaf ear to Lavitzky, who gave me a world of good advice. As we went along, I was thinking of poor Charley, and did not heed. Lavitzky, not knowing the cause of my absence of mind, redoubled his advice and cautions till we reached the mound. Everybody knows Waterloo and Hougoumont. If they have not seen it, they have read the description of it a hundred times. We had not long to wait. Our opponents soon made their appearance, and the seconds proceeded to arrange matters.

“ ‘He has brought a surgeon with him,’ I heard one of Heinkerstrom’s friends whisper to to him. There were two of them.

“ ‘Er sollte einen Leichenbesorger hergebracht haben’ (he should have brought an undertaker), observed Heinkerstrom, a little louder, and with a hoarse laugh.

“ ‘One of us may need one,’ thought I.

“All was at length arranged, the ground was measured, and we stood at our appointed

places. I glanced at Heinkerstrom. There was a small piece of fluff, or feather, or some white substance, which had accidentally stuck on the breast of his closely-buttoned surtout. He saw my glance, and looking down, with a grim smile, brushed it away. ‘*N ’importe,*’ thought I, ‘it will do.’ *I never took my eye off the spot*, though it may sound strange, not a motion or gesture of his escaped me. Heinkerstrom raised his hand slowly and steadily, looking sternly at me all the while, as if to sweep the hair from his brow, or to arrange the position of his hat. I noticed, however, that his hand paused for the least shade of a second, if pause it could be called, when it reached about the level of his own face—he was as nearly as possible of my stature—a stranger would not have remarked the motion, it was so apparently a mere ordinary gesture.

“ ‘He’s taking your measure, your height, *mon ami*—the blood-thirsty villain!’ whis-

pered Lavitzky; 'I will protest, and alter your positions.'

"'Not for the world,' I answered: 'Quick, give us the pistols, and be quiet.'

"The next moment the pistols were in our hands; our seconds withdrew a few paces; the word was given. I heard but one report, and almost feared my own pistol had missed fire, as I felt a slight jar and a sensation as if a hot wire had touched the skin of my arm. Heinkerstrom glared at me for a second, as if with rage and astonishment; then swayed backwards, with a convulsive motion recovered himself, threw up his arms, and fell like a lump of lead on his face—and Charley was avenged. My pistol had indeed saved me; an inch one way or the other in its position, and I had been with Heinkerstrom. He had passed away, and the air seemed clearer, the sky bluer than before.

"'If you hadn't shot him I should have been obliged to,' said Stevens, as we parted.

“ ‘I’m glad I saved you the trouble,’ I answered, ‘because it is possible he might have shot you.’ ”

“ And how did you feel afterwards? ” asked Ned.

“ Didn’t you feel rather uncomfortable? ” quoth Newton. It must be dreadful to kill a man, even in a duel, where the risk is equal.”

“ Feel! ” said Vincent, looking from one to the other, “ I felt no more compunction than I should in killing a rat. It is dreadful, no doubt, to kill a *man*, but such a reptile ruffian as that! I felt that I had freed the Continent of one of the greatest pests that ever disgraced it—a wretch by whose hand at least six harmless victims fell, and more than as many more were maimed for life—a villain who had ruined more innocent youths, a scoundrel who had seduced more women, broken more hearts, and caused more sorrow and disaster, in the course of his *gentlemanly* career, than any other two or three of his

class in Europe. It is fortunate for society that he did find some one to put an end to him, or Heaven knows how much more mischief he might have done by this time. Pah! don't let us talk of the dog." Vincent was undeniably a good hater. Indeed, he never did anything by halves.

Meantime, our friends, with good appetite, had been paying their *devours* to the lunch, which rapidly grew small by degrees, beautifully less under their attacks. At length the repast came to an end, and Vincent, tossing the now despised ham-bone to Ben, replaced the crockery.

"I see you are looking at that panther's head," he said, as he huddled the plates, &c., into the cupboard. "Ben, they are talking of your old friend. Painters Ben."

And Ben raised his head from the ham-bone, and looked up at the panther's visage with a low growl."

"Ah! I see you remember him."

Ben gave a half grunt, half growl, which said as plain as dog could say, "I should think I did!" and fell again to his bone.

"I slew that gentleman on the banks of the Saskatchewan, which runs into Lake Winnipeg, in North America. By the way, just after my duel with Heinkerstrom, I went there for a little change. It had often struck me that it was possible to carry a canal from Canada to the opposite shore, near Vancouver Island; and so bring the whole traffic of an almost new colony, as well as the merchandise and trade of China and the East, through Canada, thus opening a communication through a hitherto sealed-up country, and affording immense facilities for colonising and civilising it, by means of an easily-obtained high-road."

"But is that possible?" asked Newton, fully alive to the commercial magnitude and advantages of the scheme.

"Possible!" said Vincent, pausing for a moment and musing. "It never will be done,

because Russia will interfere, as she always has done, where her trade is to be competed with, and you will be, as usual, jockeyed into cutting your own throats;* but it is quite possible to construct a railway from one shore to the other, and at a very small comparative expense, too. Why, the Americans, I believe, are engaged in constructing a railway from Michigan to San Francisco, a distance of two thousand three hundred miles, whilst we have canal communication almost open as far as Lake Superior, and shall soon, if it is not already done, have rail from Quebec to Huron, and might carry one across in a distance of sixteen hundred."

"What a gigantic undertaking!" said Ned and Newton, both in a breath.

"Gigantic at the first sight, I grant you," answered Vincent.

"But the cost would be something tremendous," said Ned.

* See *Times* article of the other day, July, 1858.

“At the rate you constructed the Greenwich and Blackwall railways, which cost, one above three hundred thousand pounds and the other above two hundred thousand pounds per mile, or even the Great Western, we’ll say, which cost above fifty thousand pounds; but railways in Canada may be constructed from three thousand to four thousand pounds per mile. Split the difference, and say three thousand five hundred pounds, and your sixteen hundred miles will cost you five million six hundred thousand pounds—say six million pounds—and it will be somewhere about one-half the cost of the Great Western Railway, without any of its branches. But even this is not necessary. Look here!” and Vincent dragged out from an old box a well-thumbed map of North America. “Now, see; from Lake St. Anne, near the north-western shore of Lake Superior, to Fort Garry, on the Red River settlement, at the south of Lake Winnipeg, is a distance of four hundred miles, and

it comprises the most beautiful and fertile country in the world. It is well watered by numerous streams and lakes, while forests of elm, oak, lime, and birch spread in all directions. The ground is carpeted with no end of flowers of all sorts, and fruits which we produce in our gardens—gooseberries, raspberries, plums, and grapes—grow in wild profusion there. As to minerals, there is any amount of them, and plenty of coal to smelt them with. It is a magnificent and splendid territory, and only wants to be known; *for nothing but prejudice* (the Hudson's Bay, or "Stop the way Company") *and false reports have hitherto kept it the wilderness it is.** Well,

* These lines, written in 1852, anticipate the *Times'* article on the Red River settlement, of July, 1858. The above description is founded on the report of a gentleman who had traversed the entire route. On his report, few, if any, travellers disagree. That the *Times'* article is, therefore, a tissue of errors, it is unnecessary to state. England will only discover the value of this territory when she has lost it. What

now—look here: a line connecting the two lakes would cost about a million and a-half; or you might, at a very small cost, carry a canal from Superior to Winnipeg. See, the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake, two lakes which are feeders of Winnipeg, and throw out branches to within a very short distance of the shores of Superior. There it is, you see, water almost the whole distance. Now look at Lake Winnipeg, on the eastern side; it

other country but England would have so long been possessed of a territory comprising two millions of square miles, without sending dozens of commissioners to report upon its productions and capabilities! It is a fact that, whenever private enterprise has attempted to develop the mineral and other wealth of these regions, it has always been promptly crushed by the Hudson's Bay Company, and consequently, Englishmen at home know nothing of the boundless wealth lying fallow here. The proposition of the *Times*, for Canada to undertake the opening up of the *empire*, is of course, as the *Times* well knows, an absurdity and an impossibility, which Canada must refuse. But it must be noticed that these lands *would* produce many things we now get from Russia.

sends two large rivers, the Nelson and the Severn, down to Hudson's Bay. There the communication with the Atlantic is direct and ever open; while, on the north-western shore, the River Saskatchewan runs to it all the way from the Rocky Mountains, and is navigable for boats almost from its rise to its *embouchure*—about, let me see, about four hundred miles. See, now, on the western side of the Rocky Mountains, the river Columbia, which runs into the Pacific just below Quadra or Vancouver's Island. Now the Columbia and the Saskatchewan rise within twenty feet of one another—one flows east and the other west—so there, you see, you have a clear communication straight through to Hudson's Bay, and through which the Hudson's Bay mail is even now, or was, carried, with the exception of a short distance, and likewise with Quebec and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, all chalked out for you by nature."

"Why, it's as plain as A, B, C," said

Newton, who sat staring at the maps, and tracing the course of the rivers with a pencil. "We might beat the Yankees by chinks, if we liked, and open up a high road for new colonies all through this territory—the Hudson's Bay territory it now is, but wont be long it is to be hoped."

"Of course we might," answered Vincent, "though I prefer the railway myself—not so liable to freeze, and is so much shorter; and as for the cold winters! There must be some drawback in all new colonies, and a good deal of that has been overstated."

"But you couldn't carry your railway over the Rocky Mountains," said Ned, reflectively.

"Then how can the Yankees? But that's all nonsense. The Rocky Mountains are a mere bugbear to the scheme in question; for they are broken up into ravines and valleys every here and there, and there are plenty of places where you could slip through without

a great deal of stiff work. Even if there were not these places, you must not think of the Alps when you think of the Rocky Mountains. Their height is not so formidable as you think for; because, the rise, though great in the aggregate, is very gradual till you come to the actual peaks. They form in many places a series of immense plateaux, many hundred miles in extent; and it would be far easier to break them with a rail than it would the Alps—though a rail through the Alps is not impossible. But, never mind, perhaps the Canadians will do it themselves one of these days, when they've kicked off the old country, or have passed away from us into other hands, which may not be very many years first. But all this is apart from the painter's head I was to tell you about. You see, after the duel I wanted a bit of a change, and I was looking over that map to see if there was anything worth doing there, and the idea of the canal business struck me. So I took down the

Conventicle—by the by, I'll do the candle trick, according to promise, presently—took down the Conventicle, and had half of the precious stones out of the right side of the hilt in a twinkling. The other half took me through South America, botanising for the Society, collecting new plants where there were new ones to collect. It doesn't cost me much when I travel, for I don't mind about faring sumptuously. There's one or two in the left side of the hilt yet, you see," and Vincent took down the weapon and handed it to Ned; and there certainly had been wild work with the hilt. There were the beds where sundry precious stones abode once; but the stones themselves, with the exception of two or three, were wanting. "It doesn't matter about the hilt being precious, you know, so that it grips well, and the steel is sound." And taking a candle from the cupboard, Vincent tied a piece of string round one end of it, and suspended it from a hook in the ceiling, talking mean-

while. "Well, I took them to two Jews and a Christian successively, and the Christian was the greatest thief of the three, offering me about two-thirds of what the Jews did. I pledged them at last with one of the Jews for seventy pounds, and off I went."

"Pledged them!" said Newton.

"Yes; oh yes; they're all pledged; and I mean to have them all back again, and re-set, some of these days, whenever I can sit steadily down for a year or two, and make a fortune. No difficulty about making a fortune, you know, if you only give your mind to it, and can stick at it for a couple of years or so. So off I started. One of these days I'll tell you more about it; but we'll cut all the intermediate out now. One evening I was asleep in the canoe. This was on the Saskatchewan. By the way, we'd had a stiffish day of it, paddling from sunrise till evening, with only a pipe and an hour or so's rest in the extreme heat of the day—and it is hot in the summer, I tell you. We had

made a longish stretch of it. George, my companion, a half-bred Blackfoot, whose other name, Kish-Kosh something or other, signified 'The Wriggling Snake,' was spearing fish for supper from a flat rock, some fifty or sixty yards below. I was half leaning, half reclining against one of the low seats of the dug-out, watching his motions. Ben was lying across my legs. Now, whenever I wasn't doing anything else, particularly on the banks of a river, it was a regular custom of mine to have the butt of my revolver firmly clasped in my hand. Indeed, I usually slept with it so; for one never knows in those sort of places what may turn up, and it's always as well to be prepared. It was there now. The sun was gradually sinking, mellowing everything with its golden hues. The trees waved softly and pleasantly, the cool water gurgled deliciously. George was evidently collecting every necessary for a first-rate supper. I was in a confoundedly happy state of mind; just so tired as to feel a lazy

enjoyment in being tired, and in having somebody else to get you your supper. By degrees things began to grow dim to my eyesight, and I was just dropping off into a delightful nap, when Ben gave the faintest possible indication of a growl. Ben never wastes words, so I was broad awake in a second. Ben was looking with strained eyes and bristling mane to the landing-place, which was a few yards off—five or six, may be. I loosened my right arm, looked hastily at my revolver to see that all was right, put my arm in the most favorable attitude with regard to the landing-place, and waited with breathless expectation; but I could hear nothing. It shows, however, the extraordinary acuteness of an Indian's senses, when I tell you that hardly a second or two had elapsed after Ben's notice, when I saw, at a side-glance, George, who had his spear raised in the very act of poising to strike a fish, suddenly stand with hand, arm, and spear raised as if carved from stone, and with his head partly on one

side and turned towards me; his whole attitude gave one the idea of a pointer suddenly come upon game. I lifted up my revolver, and placed my arm in the position I have mentioned, to show him I was prepared; and, as if satisfied with the motion, he merely looked round to see that his rifle was at hand, if necessary, and loosening his knife in its sheath, he went on spearing his fish, though I could see by the way his head was turned, with one ear and half an eye cocked towards me, that his occupation by no means engrossed all his attention. The landing-place I have mentioned was a low, flat, tabular rock, very similar to the one George was spearing fish from; there was a pile of brush and dead-wood on it, which George had collected to form a fire with, partly for culinary purposes, and partly to keep away unpleasant visitors during the night. I heard a slight rustle behind it—it was close to the low underwood—and from behind it advanced a magnificent panther. Whether he was going to drink, or

to cross the river, which was only a fork, and was narrow here, I can't say ; but the instant he saw the canoe, he paused, and drew a little back. I thought he was going to spring, and was about to raise my pistol ; but he merely reconnoitered the position. I had a good view of him, and could have covered his eye from where I sat in a second ; I repressed the motion, however, and watched him. The distance seemed too great, and he backed ; and I thought he was going to back out of it and beat a retreat, which I should have allowed him to do gladly, as it is never worth while discharging fire-arms thereabouts, unless you are obliged ~~to~~. Ben behaved like a Trojan, as he always does, and he watched my eye, but never moved a muscle, though quite ready to sacrifice his life to save mine, if need be. The brute, however, after reconnoitering a moment, as I said, drew back ; there was a large tree close behind him, which threw its branches far out over the river—some of

them hung over the canoe. With one spring he was up the tree and on the lower fork ; his intention was evidently to walk out on one of the branches, and spring down on us. Things were getting unpleasant. Like a huge cat after a tomtit, he came crawling along the branch, which bent under his weight, and he was quite near enough to be pleasant when I raised my arm slowly ; he saw the motion, and lowered his head as if to spring ; but a bullet in his brain, and another between his ribs, as he hung to the branch with his fore-claws in the tenacity of a death struggle, brought him down like a pigeon, and he fell flop upon the further end of the dug-out, and upset it ; man, dog, panther, and all, went floundering, into eight or ten feet of water. The proximity of the beast, which was not yet quite dead, was not pleasant ; and I struck out for an old tree some twenty yards down, while George came bounding like a flying squirrel along the bank, rifle in hand. But there was a

more efficient ally at hand, and Ben had the beast by the throat in a twinkling. He had enough life in him to lay poor Ben's side open, and break three of his ribs with one little pat. It was a last effort, and Ben, who never let go of him, towed him ashore with George's assistance. I got out, shook myself, and lent a hand at the panther. The next day, George fished up the things which had gone to the bottom, whilst I skinned the varmint and cut off his head. Painters, Ben."

Ben growled.

"There, that's the way to slice a candle;" and, all being complete, with a drawing cut from the Conventicle, Vincent severed the candle, one half of which dropped on the ground, while the other, apparently very little disturbed by the stroke, hung slightly vibrating on the string.

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